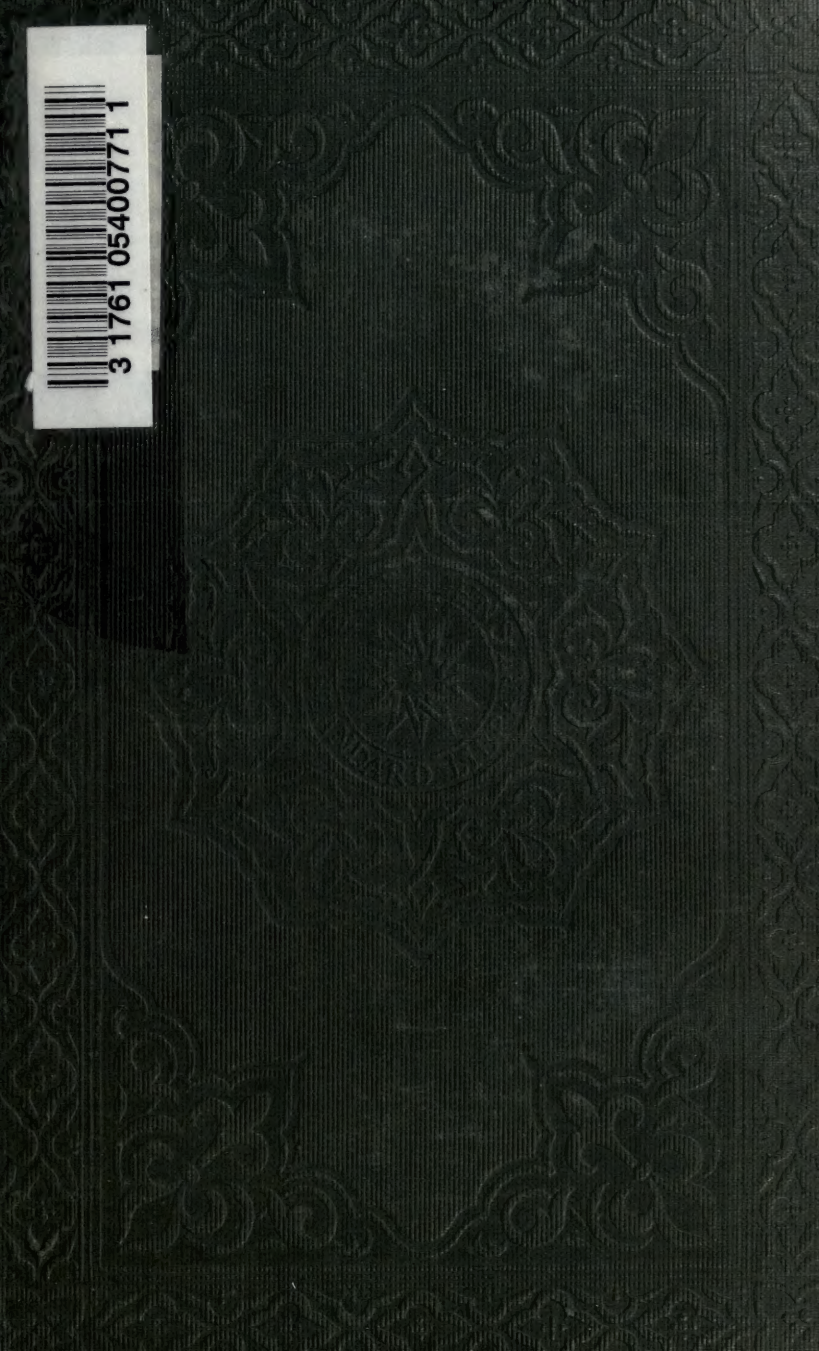




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THE PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTERS;



INCLUDING

N I N A.

TRANSLATED

BY MARY HOWITT.

LONDON :

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1852.



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THE
PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTERS.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST PRESENTATION.

With reading throw not time away,
'Tis by our sex so little needed;
But wilt thou read—make short, I pray,
Lest that the dinner spoil unheeded.

'Tis truth—a she-philosopher
Escapes not satire's sharpest stings;
And our belles-lettres, I aver,
Lie in our bracelets, gloves, and rings.

MADAME LENNGREN.

“AND my dearest Mamselle Rönquist,” added the President persuasively and impressively, laying his hand on my arm, “remember particularly, for heaven’s sake, no miracles of my girls—no miracles! I will not have them brilliant or vain ladies, nor learned, proud, and pedantic women; but simple, reasonable creatures, good wives and mothers—that is what I will have them to be! Accomplishments they may have, but only for their own amusement and that of others; to hear virtuosos I would much rather go to the concert and pay my dollar. As to reading, above all things let them read no more than is just necessary for them to be able freely and easily to converse on the subjects most current in society. All reading beyond that, and all connoisseurship, are disadvantageous to a woman, and snatch her from the sphere in which alone she can gain esteem, or benefit society. The late Frederika,” continued he, whilst a tear rose in his eye, “my late wife, held as a principle in her daughters’ education to concede something, certainly, to the capricious taste of the times in female education; but, on the other side, never to efface aught of the original form which she considered as appointed by the Creator for the existence and very being of woman, and that consists”—and the President laid a strong emphasis on every word—“in quiet domesticity, mildness, order, consideration for others, severity towards herself, in-

dustry, skilfulness, and the power of being agreeable in society as well as in the every-day life of home. Every kind of pomp and ostentation, all kinds of display before any species of public (now, heaven knows, so common among our women), were rejected by her; and she considered that a woman could, in her family circle alone, be happy as a good daughter and tender wife and mother, pleasing to her Maker, and useful to her fellow-creatures!"

To all this I listened with a sort of edification. I felt that I ought to make some remark upon it, but I did not exactly know how.

"Certainly," I began, but the President interrupted me.

"If the late Frederika had lived," said he, "her daughters would have had in her the surest model on which to fashion themselves to perfection, but the Almighty determined otherwise! My best Mamselle," added he, with as much warmth as seriousness and kindness, "be that mother to them; impress on their young souls the lessons which she would have given them; guide them according to the excellent principles which were hers, and in which I shall feel it always my duty and pleasure to instruct you—give them that tenderness, that motherly care"—his emotion prevented his continuing, and he ended hastily by saying, "and you cannot demand anything which will be beyond their father's gratitude!"

I replied with emotion, and with all the earnestness I felt in my desire to be useful.

"The education of my two elder daughters," continued the President, "is nearly completed. Edla is twenty; Adelaide seventeen. They require now more than ever, at their entrance into the world, a guiding friend. My two little darlings, on the other hand, Nina and Mina, require to be taught everything from the A B C. They are all to-day gone to dine at my sister-in-law's, but I expect them home every moment. I long to introduce them to you."

At that very moment a carriage stopped at the door, and we saw the young ladies alight. The President rung hastily and ordered in candles, and it was with a mixed feeling of curiosity, interest, and anxiety, that I awaited the entrance of my future pupils.

"Is she here! is she here already!" I heard a young, sweet voice say in the dining-room, and shortly afterwards

the four young ladies entered in a row, preceded by a footman bearing lights.

The first was a tall, thin figure, with a remarkably plain countenance, and stiff and unpleasing demeanour. She curtseyed coldly and reservedly, and was presented by her father as "Edla." "Adelaide" was then named, and a young, lovely creature approached me, and, beaming with smiles, blushingly embraced me. I thought I had never seen anything more bewitching.

"Chickens! chickens! my little chickens, Nina and Mina!" now exclaimed the President, and lifted in his arms two of the sweetest little beings in the world. Light-haired, blue-eyed, rosy-lipped, delicately formed were they; and so like each other, that in the beginning I could not possibly distinguish them. I was enchanted with these lovely little children, and desired nothing more than to make acquaintance with them. The President did all that he could to bring this about, but they clung gravely and shyly to their sisters, till I hit upon making certain long-legged, stiff-armed figures, which I cut out of cards, mediators between us. At sight of these the little ones began as it were to thaw, and presently I was covered with their carts, their dolls, and their castles, and was also informed, in confidence, that they thought my nose very large.

In the mean time I paid attention to the President, who was conversing with his two elder daughters. Adelaide related to her father the events of the day—the dinner company and the dishes. Edla added a remark or two, and even sometimes upon her sister's words. The President marvelled much at the mixture of "chicken and cauliflower." For my part, I could not take my eyes from Adelaide; she struck me as indescribably beautiful and pleasing. Her countenance was more round than oval; the forehead high and finely arched; the nose small and exquisitely formed; whilst a pair of large dark blue eyes beamed with joy and good-heartedness, and the roses of health tinged both her lips and her cheeks. Her smile, nay, her whole manner was such as we ascribe to a cherub. She was of middle height; her figure finely moulded, and her carriage noble; her neck, her arms and hands, dazzlingly white, and of the most perfect form. Her head, which was adorned with rich chestnut-brown hair, she carried a little thrown back, which gave her an appear-

ance of haughtiness, nay, almost of arrogance; nor was this contradicted by her manner, however softened that might be by an expression of sincere sweetness and goodwill. Beside this brilliant figure her sister showed like a shadow, and I suspected that it was her own sense of this which made her so gloomy.

The President himself was of a noble and remarkable appearance. He was tall, somewhat inclined to corpulency, and seemed to regard his exterior as of great importance, and, as I soon observed, was no little enchanted with his own fine hands, which he willingly placed under people's observation. In parting for the night he took me aside and said, "My elder daughters have peculiarities of character; they both require to be guided with circumspection. Edla has a difficult temper; she gave my late wife much trouble, and does the same to me. But we will hope for the best. Seriousness, great seriousness, and great consideration, are requisite with her, Mamselle Rönquist."

"To-morrow," continued he, "there is a ball and supper, and charades, and I don't know what, at my brother-in-law's, his Excellency G.'s. My daughters are going, and I hope, Mamselle Rönquist, you will be so good as to accompany them. My two little ones are to represent angels in a *tableau vivant*; for as they are too young to receive any pernicious effects from such an exhibition, I yielded to the pressing entreaties of my sister-in-law. And now good night, my best Mamselle: good night my girls."

Adelaide sprang singing before me to show me the way to my new chamber, which was large and commodious. The two little ones and I were to occupy the same room, whilst those adjoining were appropriated to Edla and Adelaide.

Before we went to bed, Adelaide made me acquainted with some of the family relationships. She told me, with a countenance beaming with joy, about her beautiful sister, Countess Augusta U., about her uncle his Excellency G., and about the morrow's party. Afterwards she spoke of her mother, and of her death; of how she had long looked forward to it, and had in consequence silently and sorrowfully arranged everything within her house and for her family, and how good and patient she was; and as she told all this, her face was bathed in tears. Edla stood by with downcast eyes; no emotion exhibited itself in her countenance, and I might have

believed her altogether indifferent had I not seen that the light trembled in her hand.

Finally, Adelaide embraced her little sisters, who drowsily hung around her neck, and then laying my pillow smooth and straight, she told me to sleep well, and particularly to remember my dreams. Her bewitching image seemed to smile upon me even in sleep; but when I awoke, I thought "what can it possibly be that weighs so on that poor Edla's soul?"

CHAPTER II.

GALATEA.—ANGELICA.

Joy is the sweet satisfaction of innocence, wisdom, and genius:
Never are griefs laughed away by deceit, or by folly.

VON BRINKMAN.

I SCARCELY know any feeling more agreeable than that which I experience on entering an elegant and well-lighted room, filled, but not overfilled, with handsome and well-dressed people. Yes, indeed, the greater the elegance and the more the magnificence the better, provided only that all is arranged in good taste, and without any appearance of either trouble or display. I experienced this feeling in a high degree as I entered the splendid saloon of his Excellency G.

After having presented me to the host and hostess, the President conducted me to a handsome woman, who was in conversation with a gentleman who stood beside her, whom he named as "My daughter, Countess Augusta U."

The young Countess — properly the President's step-daughter — was yet in deep mourning, having, as I was told, lost her husband a year ago. She saluted me politely, but with haughty condescension, and our civilities were soon at an end; and then, whilst she was occupied in conversing with some one who stood near her, I took the opportunity to survey the company. In the first place, my eye sought out my new pupils. Adelaide was surrounded with people, among whom I particularly remarked a young man, tall, fair, ruddy and handsome, who moved first on this side of her, and then on the other, and had all the appearance of a person in love who wishes to make himself agreeable! I saw with some disquiet Adelaide's manner, which seemed to me not

free from coquetry; but after all, there was so much real joyousness in her eyes, so much natural animation in her gestures, that I remained uncertain whether there really was any cause for my fears. Edla had seated herself in a corner of the room; she spoke to no one, and no one spoke to her; she looked gloomy and reserved. The two lovely little ones were walking about hand in hand, receiving with genuine childish arrogance the universal tribute of flattery and caresses, and extending to such as were to their taste their most gracious hand to kiss.

My eyes next fell on the gentleman who had been speaking with Countess U., and who was now in conversation with Excellency G. When he was silent, a certain unbending severity seemed to be the predominant expression of his noble countenance; but when he spoke, a light and life seemed diffused over it. His figure was tall, and displayed both firmness and strength; and there was something of the Roman General in his bearing and demeanour. His dress was that of a civilian, but various ribbons and decorations showed that he was, or had been, military. I could not, with certainty, determine whether he were nearer thirty or forty. A comparison between him and his Excellency forced itself upon me: in his countenance lay that gravity which shows that the thoughts and the will are directed towards a fixed and determined aim; in that of his Excellency, on the contrary, the gravity which is often assumed to conceal the emptiness of thought and the imbecility of the will.

In the middle of the sofa sat, with the look of an empress, a lady dressed in blue velvet with a diadem of jewels beaming on her most beautiful forehead, the expression of whose fine and noble countenance seemed to be pride and melancholy. She gazed about her, as if she saw nothing worthy of her attention, and then gave to the men who surrounded her a variety of commands and commissions; indeed, she seemed to have a particular pleasure in putting people in motion.

"Ah, Greta! sweet Greta!" said she to another lady who sat in the corner of the sofa, "where is my reticule?"

"My sweet friend!" replied the latter, "I beg to be excused looking for it—I am sitting here very comfortably."

Nevertheless, a minute afterwards "the sweet Greta" went and sought for the missing reticule.

I was very curious to know the name of the beautiful lady, when at that very moment our polite hostess, the Baroness G., came and seated herself beside me, and with much goodness named to me the surrounding company.

“That handsome woman with the diadem,” said she, “is the Dowager Countess Natalie M., as rich as she is intellectual, and as intellectual as she is beautiful. The lady who is seated so comfortably in the corner of the sofa, with the Grecian profile and the large but finely-moulded figure, is Miss Margarethe R., the cousin and very good friend of the Countess, and a most original and interesting person.”

So continued the amiable Baroness for a long time, exhibiting some perfection or other in every individual of the assembly. I wished to ask her of the noble Roman, but he was not now in the room.

“But the most interesting person in my company for the evening,” the Baroness went on to say, “is not yet here. She is a young girl called Angelica, another Angelica Kauffman; she is of a remote province, and will unquestionably excite great attention from her extraordinary talent in painting. She is to assist us this evening with our tableaux. My relation Baroness Palmin discovered her in a small provincial town, and has now taken her with her to let her see a little of the world. Her father, it seems, is only a common painter, but the daughter——”

“Who is she? where does she come from? where is she?” asked Miss Greta, who, having left her comfortable sofa corner, approached us, and had heard the Baroness’s last words.

“Here she is!” answered the Baroness, as she rose and left us to receive an elderly and somewhat oddly attired lady who had just entered, followed by a person whose appearance was so uncommon as to attract not only mine but the attention of the whole company. This was a young girl of probably eighteen, extremely slight and delicate, but of exceeding beauty. Her face was pale, but was literally, as one may say, lighted up by a pair of large, dark eyes, which had in them all the beaming life and mysticism of the stars. She wore a simple white dress, and her light brown hair fell in curls round her neck, nor was there the slightest ornament or finery of any kind upon her.

“Ah!” exclaimed Miss Greta, half audibly, “a heroine of romance—an Amanda!”

Baroness Palmin, whose kind goodwill was legible in her eyes, presented the young girl right and left. She, however, in a grave and peculiar manner, merely bowed her head, proudly acknowledging greetings here and there, and then remained standing until Adelaide rose and invited her to sit by her. She did so, and then looked quietly round on the company with her large and darkly gleaming eyes. Scarcely was she seated, when the Baroness Palmin was heard exclaiming—

“Ah, she is so clever! so clever! You should only just see her alpus. She has an alpus in which she draws everybody. Angelica, my sweet child, come and show us your alba!”

Angelica rose, and while a slight colour tinged her cheek, presented to her protectress the album which she held in her hand.

“Ah! it is really a most interesting alba,” continued the Baroness, as she turned over the pages; “come now, and explain to us what all these drawings mean.”

Angelica stood still and silent, and seemed much distressed. An excitement, however, in the company at that moment, greatly to her relief, drew the general attention from her. The lady of the house came forward, with a note in her hand and a disturbed countenance.

“What shall we do?” said she, “we shall get no Galatea. Little Eva has fallen ill and cannot come. Good heavens! where, where shall we find a Galatea?” and so saying, her eyes went questioning round the room, and rested on Angelica, and then both she and Baroness Palmin began to entreat her to take upon herself little Eva’s part.

The President, however, at this moment came suddenly up to me and whispered earnestly, “Cannot Adelaide—cannot Adelaide be Galatea?”

I felt as if dropped from the clouds at a proposition apparently so in opposition to his and “the late Frederika’s principles;” but seeing that he was really in earnest, I merely answered, “I dare say she can;” and at the same moment the Baroness turned from the obstinately refusing Angelica to the President, to ask his daughter for the Galatea.

The thing was soon arranged. It will be wonderful to be dead, and then again to be living," said Adelaide; "heaven grant that I may only keep my gravity."

Her aunt carried her off triumphantly, and the Baroness Palmin called to the Roman, who had just now re-entered the room.

"Ah, Count Rulrick,—Count Rulrick!" said she, "you who have travelled, and are a connoisseur, must see this albus! you can best understand its value."

He took the book; turned over its pages, and then gave it back, without either a word or look of approbation.

Angelica saw this, and coloured deeply.

"Well, what says the Count? Is it not a charming alputs," demanded the incorrigible Baroness Palmin, "and has she not wonderful talent?"

Angelica, who was at this moment called out of the room by the lady of the house to assist in robing the Galatea, did not hear the Count's reply.

"It is difficult from sketches," said he, "to form any judgment;" and then, after having asked some questions relative to Angelica, which the Baroness answered, again and again assuring him that she had uncommon genius, and drew charmingly! charmingly! he rose up and left her. Shortly afterwards he seated himself by an elderly gentleman, whose countenance, full of worth and goodness, inspired confidence. I sate near enough to hear their conversation.

"Why, Alarik," said the gentleman, "were you so severe upon the Baroness's *alputs*? Did you not see how painfully the poor girl blushed? It would have been so easy for you to say a kind word."

"Against my conscience, yes; and against the girl's best interests!" said the Count; "the drawings were below all criticism."

"That may be," returned the other, "but nevertheless she is a young and a poor girl, and all the hopes of her future life are founded on this talent."

"Precisely for that very reason," replied the Count, "one might, without its being blameworthy, speak words of commendation to a mediocre amateur, but not so to any one whose whole well-being and whole usefulness in the world must depend upon their advancing beyond the bounds of

mediocrity. One cannot do society and the younger members of it a greater disservice than by extolling, and praising, as is now so common, the humblest attempts in music, in poetry, and in painting. The artist must be great, he must be a genius, or he must remain no artist at all."

"Is not that too severe?" asked the other, "and may not works of art even of inferior merit give pleasure to the artist, as well as to the world in general?"

"The most exalted and the truest life of art," returned the Count, "is a middle link which should unite heaven and earth, the prototype and the reality. Our times seem to have forgotten this, and can only be reawakened to this truth by powerful spirits and by real works of art. I repeat it, say what you like to young amateurs who enliven the social circles with songs and music, and who adorn and cheer their home with pictures and verses—one branch of art may be dedicated to the embellishment of domestic life—but do not encourage, by one single word, him who intends to present himself before the public, unless you are convinced that he is possessed of decided talent and real genius. If you do, you have only assisted in making one more unfortunate and useless being in the world. And a woman! What power, what perseverance, and, in addition, what good fortune must she not have, if she be able successfully to combat against the difficulties and hindrances which will meet her at every step in the path of art. Art is, for the mediocre-artist, a Tantalus-spring, which perpetually excites his thirst, and as perpetually flies his lips."

"And which at the same time robs him of his bread," added the other. "Yes, you are right; but this young Angelica has something in her eyes——"

"I grant it," conceded the Count; "her glance speaks a very different language to her drawings."

"And do not judge me by them!" said a low silver voice close behind them, and Angelica's light form disappeared among the guests, who now completely thronged the room.

At that moment his Excellency invited the company to move into the dining-room, where everything was ready for the representation of the tableaux, the first of which was to be a scene, "Pygmalion and Galatea," composed by Angelica, and enacted by a young and very promising artist, Mr. Hugo L.

It required a considerable time before the company had taken their places; at length, however, all were arranged; all eyes were directed upon an elegant curtain, and an expectant silence reigned through the room.

The curtain rose, and Galatea was seen standing upon her pedestal. Pygmalion, with burning love, adored his work—his work, which had proceeded from the inmost sanctuary of his soul, the revelation of the god who dwelt there. There stands she before him—the beauty which his genius contemplated, the work of his hands, the soul of his soul—but motionless, cold, and silent. He had shaped this heavenly being, but she heard him not, she understood him not. Pygmalion's heart burns for her. Should not such a love, should not the glowing breath of life, be powerful enough to penetrate the very marble's self? Would the creative power of the enamoured artist be inefficient to pronounce "let there be light!" over this slumbering world? This cry, this cry of love, "Galatea! Galatea!" shall it not reach her heart? Pygmalion hopes and despairs by turns.

Does not her mouth smile, as his eye rests upon it in unutterable prayer? Does not her heart beat under his hand? Hush! does she not breathe?

But no! she breathes not, she smiles not, she answers not. She stands still and immovable, but inexpressibly beautiful and inexpressibly touching in her reposing life. It is Eden, over which no stormy winds have yet passed; it is Eve in the first moments of creation, before the breath of love has yet moved her heart! No pain, no joy, has yet found an entrance there; no pulse of life yet beats! But how rich in promise does she not appear! The angel of life seems to stand so near—only a breath, and the image of divinity will breathe, and a world of goodness and beauty come into being! The ideal will become the real.

Pygmalion calls on the gods.

"Immortal gods! in the moments when, in the holy ecstasies of devotion, my feelings raised themselves to you, and received a kindling from your glory, then was it that her image was born in my soul. I have shaped her as an image of you, and in her I now live. She is my nobler self; she is the divine part in me; she is my soul, my all! Holy gods give her that life which proceeds from you alone. Gods!

restore me to myself in her ; else shall I, by this marble form in which my heart is hidden, languish and be consumed. O gods ! this creation has come from you, give it the power to acknowledge you and praise you !

“ I am alone on the earth ; I am my own no longer ! *There* is my heart, my love ; my prayer is there, with her—my other, my better self !

“ See, how beautiful she is ! Would not her smile glorify the earth ? Would not her tears deprive pain and evil of their sting ? Gods ! consecrate to yourselves this temple ! Infuse your spirit into it—the holy spirit of love ! Give her life, give her bliss, and will not Galatea thank you !”

Pygmalion again approaches the statue ; tears gleam in his eyes. Hope, doubt, love, despair, fill his soul at the same moment. Yet once again he lays his hand enquiringly on her heart ; yet once again he exclaims, with the deepest tone of love, “ Galatea !”

At that same moment a slight shudder passed through the marble image ; the breath of life seemed hurrying through its limbs. The bosom heaved with a gentle sigh. Galatea breathed ; her eye moved ; she laid her hand upon her heart. Thus stood she for one moment, as if collecting herself and listening to the wonderful movements of life. A bewitching smile parts her lips ; an expression of blessed self-consciousness, of glad surprise, spreads itself over her countenance.

Supremely happy Pygmalion !

So I believe thought every one of the spectators at the moment when Galatea's eye slowly turned upon him, and the curtain fell. So thought certainly Count Alarik in particular, who, standing behind Countess Augusta's chair, seemed perfectly lost in the contemplation of Galatea. At the moment when she respired, I saw his eye glance fire ; he grew pale, and breathed deep ; it was in vain that the Countess Augusta endeavoured to distract his attention—he heard her not.

I had also another enchanted neighbour ; but he was talkative in the same degree as Count Alarik was silent. This was the fair tall young man, who, earlier in the evening, had been so attentive to Adelaide. He twitched the corner of his pocket-handkerchief, and exclaimed without intermission, “ Heavens ! how lovely she is ! Is not she charming ?

is she not the sweetest creature on earth? Ah! I wish I were the footstool she stands on. Good heavens, how beautiful she is!"

Several other tableaux followed this, all which were universally admired. The two "little ones," who had to represent Raphael's angels, were at first somewhat indocile; but once reduced to order by kind words and promises of confections, they clasped together their little white hands, and after having turned their blue eyes first one way and then another, finally got them properly directed upwards, and looked enchantingly.

After the representations were concluded, the company returned to the drawing-rooms, emulating each other in the praise of what they had seen, adding occasionally a slight observation; and no sooner was the Baroness Palmin again in the drawing-room, than again began her introduction of Angelica, and her pressing upon everybody the sketch-book, which she called variously, *alpus*, *alputs*, and *alba*.

But now Adelaide sung, and everybody listened to her beautiful voice, and her simple, expressive manner.

"That is song!" I heard Count Alarik say to some one; "that speaks to the soul: every single word is heard, and is pronounced with expression. And no affectation."

Adelaide finished, and all gathered around her excepting Count Alarik, and he was conversing with Angelica.

Baroness Palmin, who saw this, and thought the moment too propitious to be lost, came again with assurances that Angelica was "so clever, that several professors had seen her *albus*, and had admired it, etc. etc." Adelaide, however, who remarked Angelica's embarrassment, disengaged herself from those who surrounded her, and coming up to Angelica, took her and said, "Come, come with me, and I will show you something beautiful," and so saying led her to another room. I followed them into a cabinet decorated with fine oil-paintings and living flowers.

"How beautiful you are!" exclaimed Angelica, stopping short and looking at Adelaide with an expression of joy and admiration.

"Do you think so?—that is pleasant!" returned Adelaide, somewhat surprised, but with *naïve* and unaffected pleasure.

"And you are as good as you are beautiful. I must draw you," said Angelica.

"O, willingly!"

Paper and pencils lay on the table, and the drawing was begun instantly. Meantime some of the guests were assembling in the cabinet. The fair young man placed himself behind Angelica's chair, contemplating Adelaide, and expressing his admiration of her.

"Ah, she! the sweet, the heavenly creature! She is to be drawn; and I shall beg for the portrait; and I shall have it engraved, and the whole world shall see how sweet and bewitching she is! And the whole world shall adore her!—yes, yes, the whole world shall adore her just like me!"

"Be quiet, Otto," said Adelaide; "you interrupt us. Get away, dear Otto!"

I greatly wondered who "dear Otto" was. He retired to a little distance, but seemed every moment ready to fall on his knees.

A question arose in the company respecting one of the pictures, which represented a scene from the Grecian mythology, and which was praised by Count Alarik.

"I, for my part," said some one, "cannot help regretting that a great master should choose such a subject for his pencil. Should not the aim of art be to exalt what is morally good? and what good or ennobling impression can pictures of this kind excite? are they not rather, on the contrary, demoralizing?"

Count Alarik smiled thoughtfully. "The Greeks," said he, "took a lively and deep view of the relationship between the divinity and nature. They felt that it was its property to incorporate itself with all creation, to pour life into all its different forms. It is this view which stands prominent in the Grecian mythology, which embodies itself in the creative arts, for which it is so rich a fountain; and with its influence on the fancy, the brightest era of the creative arts has passed."

Angelica started and looked up; her dark eyes flashed. After a moment's pause she continued her drawing.

"The letter kills, the spirit makes alive," said the Countess Augusta. "We see the former now, without being able to take hold on the latter, and this occasions such warped judgments."

“O Greece, Greece!” exclaimed a small gentleman with large aristocratic epaulettes. “It was the world of poetry and art; of all that was beautiful and heavenly. That day is passed, never again to return! How beautifully Schiller says this in his poem, ‘The Gods of Greece!’”

I had already seen this gentleman, in the beginning of the conversation, turning over the pages of a volume of Schiller which lay on the table, and now taking up the book, he read aloud “Die Götter Griechenlands.” All heard him with pleasure, for he read well, though not without some affectation; and at all events the words of this great poet could not fail of making their impression.

“How beautiful, how perfect is this expression, die entgötterte Natur,” exclaimed the little man with the epaulettes, after he had ceased reading; “how strikingly does it paint our present actual world! In the beautiful days of mythology all was life; a naiad was seen in every stream; the heart of Daphne beat under the rind of the laurel; the daughter of Tantalus was hidden by the stone; the rivulet was swollen by the tears of Calypso; a dryad concealed itself in every tree; genii laughed from the cups of every flower; all, all spoke of a celestial presence!

“And now, my most honoured company,” continued he, after he had thus served us up a prose ragout of “Die Götter Griechenlands,” “now, in our enlightened days, who thinks of seeing in a stone anything more than a stone; in a spring, anything more than good water for drinking or for cooking? The finest quality of a tree is its giving wood to light the fire; and of flowers, we think with pleasure only as they are fit to steep in brandy, to cure wounds and such things with.”

“A word or two on that head,” said Miss Greta, laughing heartily. “Brandy of lily of the valley is very excellent! It cured me lately of a wound!” and so saying, she showed a little scar upon her plump, somewhat large, but beautifully formed hand. The whole company laughed. Count Alarik smiled again thoughtfully, and looked at Angelica, who had risen from her seat, and whose countenance evinced an extraordinary emotion. “Hush!” said he, for she was about to speak, and the eyes of all followed the direction of his. Her large eyes gleamed forth, as if they sought to penetrate some deep mystery. She grew pale, and a slight shudder passed

through her frame; at length, she looked up full and clearly on those around her, and said, with a voice wonderfully distinct and penetrating—"And has this spiritual world really vanished from nature? Do not the beneficent powers which are hidden in her productions clearly prove that Divinity is there, and speaks to man as in the earlier times, even though he may sometimes forget the beauty of the gift in the uses which he extracts from it."

Count Alarik looked at her with a smile of satisfaction; the man with the epaulettes gaped in surprise, and Angelica continued, in a voice calm, yet full of inspiration—"The Divinity gives Himself in His works, incorporates Himself with them. O this must be an eternal truth! Is there any one amongst us who has not felt God in His works, who has not read His words there? But God makes himself known in the Christian Revelation otherwise than in the Grecian worship. As He give Himself by the Word to the congregation, so does He give Himself by the sun to nature—man and flower drink at the same fountain of love!"

Angelica ceased, and seemed to collect herself; and then with a beaming smile she continued—

"When the sun from the height of heaven blesses and communicates to vegetation his light and warmth (for what he does not bless, that has no strength), he says, 'Take, and eat, for this is I.' But he does not give himself piecemeal in these innumerable hosties, but remains in heaven one and the same."*

Angelica's eyes beamed at these words with a celestial joy; Count Alarik took her hand and pressed it; Hugo L. smiled contemptuously.

"Charming!" cried his Excellency, with a half-suppressed yawn; "very fine sentiments!"

A confused murmur ran through the assembly. "Beautiful!" said some; "desperately over-stretched!" said others, "desperately exalted!"

Countess Natalie M., who stood at the table just opposite to Angelica, bent over it, and offered her her hand; tears shone in her beautiful eyes, and she warmly and affectionately said, "Thanks!" Miss Greta, on the contrary, looked

* This idea belongs to Franz Baader. See "Vierzig Sätze aus einem Religiösen Erotik."

fixedly on the young girl with a sharp and searching glance. A tear stood in Adelaide's eye, and a momentary paleness chased the roses from her cheek. The sketch of the portrait, which was now completed, was in Count Alarik's hand, and he contemplated it with undisguised pleasure.

"You have not drawn in the album I have just seen?" said he to Angelica.

"Yes," she replied, "but three years ago; I was then a child, and my soul lay in bonds."

"Why then take it about with you? why show it?" asked he.

"Baroness Palmin——" said Angelica, blushing.

Count Alarik shrugged his shoulders. "This is excellent!" he said, as he compared the sketch with the original, who now hastily regained her beautiful colour; "like, and sketched with freedom and grace——"

Adelaide nodded gaily to Angelica. At that moment supper was announced.

I was fortunate enough to have for my neighbour the gentleman who seemed to be an intimate acquaintance of Count Alarik; and I hoped from him to learn something more of this remarkable man. Nor did I deceive myself; he answered my questions most cheerfully and frankly.

"Count Alarik W.," said he, "is one of the most excellent and extraordinary men that I know. He served with distinguished bravery in the German war. When peace was made for Sweden, he retired from the army and withdrew altogether from the world, devoting himself to science and philosophy, on an old family estate which had come to his hands in a ruinous condition and loaded with debt——don't burn yourself with the *bouillon*! Ah! I see you have cold milk——to satisfy the demands of needy creditors he sold whatever valuables he had inherited from his forefathers, and lived for many years in extremely narrow circumstances; nay, he was even, I believe, poor. Now, however, he has improved his lands; which, after all, are not large, and make no Croesus of him——O! oysters, oysters! thank heaven! and the most delicious grouse! this *à la daube* is the hostess's crown!——they say now that he has come out into the world again to look about for a rich wife; but I don't believe it."

"And why not?" asked I.

"Madeira or port wine, my most gracious?—He is not the man," continued my neighbour, as he filled his glass; "not that I think there is anything wrong in a man looking for money and a wife at the same time—I am just doing the same myself—but Alarik has his own notions. He is an uncommon and an excellent man—a true lion-nature, and I have only one thing against him; that he is too peculiar, too obstinate, and even severe to harshness against the weaknesses of others——poached eggs and mushrooms——a little weak. He thinks that the will, founded on sound principles, can govern the whole life in the smallest as well as in the greatest particulars. He knows no weakness in himself, no vacillating between wrong and right, and therefore he cannot pardon it in others."

"And is it always so easy," asked I, "and particularly as regards others, to decide what is wrong and what is right?"

"Ask Alarik, ask Alarik," said he, "and he'll tell you. For my part, I think that to soften what is too hard in him, what is too stern, in short to make him quite perfect, there requires only one thing——tender lamb's cutlets with green peas, my most gracious!"

"Charming!——and this one thing is——?"

"To love—to love a mild and amiable woman."

"Has he never loved?" asked I.

"Never!—a misfortune which happened to his brother seems hitherto to have frightened him from love and marriage. He will, he says, make science his mistress and his wife. He has lived with her now a dozen years, and God knows if he have not found her a little wearisome, a little frosty—so at least I conjecture. They say now, that he is to marry the President's step-daughter, Countess Augusta U. Well! she is handsome and extremely rich, and does not seem very much to hate him; but after all, I know a wife that would suit him better——cold pike with shrimp sauce——almost too salt——aj! aj!"

"And who then is it?" asked I.

"Just that good, beautiful angel to whom he is now talking."

I looked and saw Count Alarik leaning over Adelaide's chair; they were both laughing.

“Faith, a handsome couple!” continued my neighbour. “No, but this is pleasant! I have not seen him laugh so heartily since his brother’s death. Now let us look a little at the rest of the good people here. What luxury in toilette and eating! our finances must suffer; we must be ruined, all and every one of us!—what is this again? Fowls with oyster sauce! for the second, third, fourth times, welcome ye oysters! One cannot live without oysters!—do you see that young girl who, with fingers as white as the snow-flakes, the wing of a chicken is breaking, with a pale, fine countenance, expressive both of talent and goodness, and who contemplates that lovely Miss Adelaide with such sincere admiration? Can you believe that fortune and the world have done all they could to spoil her, and have not succeeded? She never ceases to forget herself for others. That young man standing behind her chair there, seems to have very kind intentions towards her.”

“Have you not remarked,” inquired I, “that that inborn envy of each other’s advantages, for which women have been so long and so severely blamed, seems now to have entirely disappeared from society, especially among the young? They are really the first to give the meed of hearty admiration to any remarkably gifted one among them. The lily and the rose contend no longer, but paying mutual homage become fairer from that cause.”

“Ah, certainly, certainly! No question the world becomes more and more moral. And there is Aunt Gunilla in a turban, than which Mahomet could not have a finer! Twenty years ago a little girl who was fed on morning dew and parsley, and now a great lady—is it not quite wonderful that we mean quite a different thing when we say, ‘a great lady,’ to what we mean when we say, ‘a great man!’—she eats with a keen, connoisseur’s tongue from every dish, and thinks meanwhile on her supper next week; I hope she will invite me!—pudding? That was a pity! No, I thank you!—Baroness B. is charmingly beautiful this evening—and her husband, as usual, jealous of that little fair gentleman, who certainly never thought of anything wrong, but who has become the man’s *bête noire*. Look at that betrothed pair who have flitted through the honeymoon before the bridal—hem! aj! aj! there, two servants came in contact!

Preserve the roast!—I am sorry for that young woman, she tries to be gay, but is pale, and scarcely can eat, and that because her husband sits at the card-table, and takes the food from the mouths of his children, or others, which is no better. Look at the Mamselles T., who are eating turkey and giggling! and their father, who swallows them with his eyes, and thinks nothing on the whole earth so charming as his daughters. 'They are wonderful, wonderful!' he says. A happy family!—you will drink, I hope, a glass of negus? See, here we have an Etna! admire in this ice-cake the power of art to unite cold and heat, and by means of the agreeable to destroy the appetite, which is such an especial means of health—look now how anxiously mamma yonder winks to her young daughter not to eat, and how dutifully she lays down the spoon which was just at her lips—such a daughter would just suit me. We have really a very fine collection of people—listen, what a noise and hum, just like a beehive when it is about to swarm! It is really wonderful, how people are capable of talking so incessantly.—The women really dress themselves well in our days; elegance without extravagance, an agreeable medium, with the exception of what regards arms, and that strikes both my eyes and my shoulders! But see the heads of the young ladies, how beautiful they are with their uncovered hair—may I help you to jelly? The pastry is certainly from Behrend's—this supper is something out of the common way—I am quite satisfied with it! Fine peaches! What pray? You prefer rennets. Well, it is better that every one's taste is not for the same thing. Now, do not be surprised that I help myself to so many sweetmeats—they are for my poor little children—whom I mean to have before ten years are over; one must be provident in one's days."

The supper came to an end, and we rose from the table. I hope that all the guests had been as well entertained as I.

Reader, inhabitant of Stockholm! thou hast been to suppers, and therefore knowest that when they are finished the company has no more rest; they do not seat themselves again in repose, but divide themselves into little groups, and stand about and converse together until the carriages and the moment of departure arrive. You therefore, without fear of

being seduced into too long conversations, can follow me on a little flying visit round these gay groups, and then when we light on any drop of wisdom or liveliness—any of the honey-dew of life—we will pause and suck it out. What now may this good gentleman be discussing so fluently to these ladies—let us listen!

“Sacrifices, self-renunciation! Empty words; there is no self-renunciation! All that we do or say is done or said merely through self-interest. The highest, ay, the most Christian virtue, is nothing else than well-understood self-interest. The mainspring of all our actions, good or evil, is self-interest.”

A lady, whose countenance was remarkable for nothing excepting its paleness, and the expression of almost holy calmness which rested upon it, and beamed especially from a pair of light brown eyes, said with a gentle smile, “One hears that you have never loved.”

“And what,” demanded her opponent warmly—“what is love or friendship but self-interested passion? We love an object because it is agreeable to us, because it gives us pleasure, and because we expect, by means of its tenderness and devotion, an increase of our own happiness.”

The pale lady was silent a moment with downcast eyes, as if she provingly looked into her own heart; she then raised them again, moist but assured, and repeated, with a momentary blush, and in a tone of sincere conviction—

“No, you have never loved!”

After this she made no further answers to the mass of proofs which were brought forward to establish the dominance of self-interest in this world.

Some young ladies have collected in the cabinet. The young, stout, richly-dressed Countess L. throws herself carelessly and contentedly into a cushioned chair. The youthful Mrs. T. stands before a mirror and arranges her curls.

Countess L. How warm it is! I am ready to die! What a charming easy-chair! I shall soon get one of red silk, with fringe. Have you such a cushioned chair, Sophie?”

Mrs. T. No, I am poor—I!”

And a smile expressive of that happiness which is life's best riches passed with bewitching grace over her angelic countenance.

His Excellency the noble and highly-gifted W——r relates an anecdote to Miss Greta. His story illustrates merely goodness, simple, unpretending goodness. Miss Greta listens with attention and delight, and when the speaker has finished, she says with delicacy and elegance—

“If genius and intellect always did honour to Virtue, she would then be called what she is—Excellence;” and so saying, she slightly bows her head to the noble speaker.

Here pause we, my reader. The carriages roll up; the ladies curtsy, and the gentlemen bow. It is time for us to separate.

In the room where they put on their cloaks I saw the Countess Natalie hastily approach Angelica, and putting forth her white hand from the rich ermine lining of her cloak, take that of the young girl. “We must meet again,” she said; “come to me to-morrow, that we may talk further.”

“I do not go out,” said Angelica with some pride; “I have no time.”

“In two days,” said the Countess Natalie, taking her somewhat aside, “I am going into the country to my relation, his Excellency G., our host this evening; may I take you with me? He has a fine collection of works of art. Well, may I?”

Angelica looked at the engaging Countess undeterminedly and coldly. “My father,” she said hesitatingly; “my time——”

“Aha! difficulties! So much the better. I like combating with difficulties. I shall win you. Expect me positively to-morrow;” and away she went.

“Has Angelica got her *alpus* with her?” asked Baroness Palmin anxiously, as she seated herself in the carriage. Only think if it had been dropped in the street.”

“Amen! Heaven grant it!” said Miss Greta, yawning, as she threw herself into the corner of her coach.

My first question when I came home was, who the “dear Otto might be?”

“Otto!” exclaimed Adelaide; “young Otto, my cousin and my betrothed.”

“Betrothed!” repeated I with astonishment.

“Yes, for long. We have grown up together, and we played as children at being lovers.”

“Joke may become earnest,” said the President significantly.

Adelaide did not reply, but bit her under lip, which afterwards swelled like a cherry, as wilful as pretty.

Poor Edla returned as silent and sullen as she had gone out. I had not, during the whole evening, seen one gay or friendly expression on her countenance.

Next day, after an instruction of three hours' length on the educational principles of the late *Presidenska*, which I again heard with much edification, the President allowed me to have an insight into the position of the family.

“We shall,” said he, “invite Count Alarik to our house, and endeavour to make it agreeable to him. Augusta will be here a great deal; she is yet too young to receive a gentleman's visits alone, and I desire greatly a marriage between her and the Count. It would be a suitable match on either side, and I think that both of them are inclined for it. His character is as high as his name and rank, and his small fortune is no objection, since hers is so considerable.

“Adelaide,” continued he, “will probably be before long *Baroness G.* Otto and she are suitable to each other in every respect. Adelaide requires a rich husband, for she has a taste for show and amusement, to which her beauty and her position in society entitle her. She would be quite unhappy in a narrow circle and with a contracted income. In the mean time I will not hurry matters; such things succeed best when they are left to themselves: I like cautious measures, *Mamselle Rönquist*. With patience and a little diplomacy one may make quite sure of guiding both people and things as one desires. My brother-in-law and I are neighbours in the country—in summer we often meet—the young folks pick flowers together, eat strawberries together, listen to the lark and the linnet—in autumn I think we shall have the marriage. In the mean time, whenever my sister-in-law desires Adelaide's society, I willingly let her accompany her into the world.”

The President informed me also that in two days the birthday of the *Baroness G.* was to be celebrated. A fête was to be given at their country seat, a mile from the town, and he proposed to me that I should accompany his daughters, to which I willingly assented.

The appointed day came, and we set out. Adelaide was so gay, so lovely, so affectionate towards Edla, that she could not resist the influence of this young spring sun. She was, during this little journey, in the fine, clear autumn weather, gayer and more friendly than I had ever seen her before.

As soon as we entered the magnificent castle of his Excellency G., we were received on the stairs by his Excellency and Otto, who, beside himself with joy, dropped on his knees before Adelaide. After we had arranged our toilette in the chambers which were prepared for us, we were conducted by the Baroness down to the library, where the company were assembled for tea. There, surrounded by books, by flowers, and pictures, Countess Augusta and Count Alarik were walking up and down, and conversing together. The President took his seat immediately by the side of his admired Countess Natalie, who listened to his politeness very inattentively, whilst Miss Greta sat half reclined in the corner of a sofa, looking at her beautiful nails, and casting now and then from her dark eyes searching glances at the various personages in the room. Silent, but with smiling lips and an inspired eye, Angelica, with the lightness of a sylph, flitted from statue to statue.

The birthday came, and with it a crowd of neighbours, congratulations and verses, a ball and an illumination. But it gives me now no pleasure to talk of birthdays—of verses so poor—of guests so insipid—of pleasures which fatigue, and of lamps which go out—it pleases me rather to stretch my wing (the goosequill) to a higher flight, and talk a little about GENIUS.

CHAPTER III.

GENIUS.

This heavenly gift, with its pure ear, into which Heaven speaks its wonders; with its free, melodious tongue, which without effort, with free natural facility reproduces them to the world.

Letter from B—.

ADJOINING the library was a rotunda, in which were collected statues and busts of artists and great geniuses. Here it was that Angelica passed her time when she could free herself from the company.

The Baroness, who willingly desired to make Angelica's

talents subserve to the amusement of her guests, proposed for her to draw them one after another, which, as she said, could be nothing but a pleasure to the young artist, as well as good exercise for her. Angelica obeyed coldly, made with incredible rapidity a number of beautiful portraits, but received all the praises and all the flatteries that were heaped upon her with the most perfect indifference: it was not in unfriendliness, nor in pride, nor contempt, for she was mild and gentle, but it was altogether indifference, and whenever she could disengage herself from the company she withdrew herself to the rotunda. Here she would have spent whole hours in the contemplation of those marble forms in which genius had immortalized genius. Sometimes she sate and read there, surrounded by the noble dead, who, though silent as the grave, yet spoke of life's deepest mysteries. Oftener, however, was she employed in copying them; and when she sate there with her pencil and her drawing-book, the room might be full of people, they might be talking around her of what they would, she perceived nothing. One image, one thought always recurred in Angelica's sketches, as well as in her larger drawings, and that was the form of an angel. It seemed as if a supernatural beauty and holiness hovered for ever before her fancy, and as if she strove to express this her contemplation. An inexpressible striving after the realizing of an ideal seemed to work within her. There were often great faults in her compositions, particularly in the drawing of the figures; but more expression, more beauty in looks and smiles, and above all, more life, might perhaps be looked for in vain in the works even of the greatest masters. Count Alarik was forced to concede this, and even at Adelaide's request to acknowledge traces of this life in the unfortunate "alpus" which he at first had treated so contemptuously.

Angelica was an extremely rare character. Silent, contemplative, and reserved, she appeared to have eye and ear only for life. It required an effort for her to express herself in words. When any feeling or thought seized powerfully upon her, it was as if she were under the impulse of a spirit whose power she could not oppose; her whole being was shaken in such moments; she became pale, and whatever she spoke bore the impression of a deep inspiration. After

such moments of excitement she not unfrequently burst into tears, and was restless and exhausted. At such times it gave her pleasure to see Adelaide near her; and the contemplation of her beauty, together with the expression of joy and goodness in her young countenance, had the effect of calming and strengthening her.

One evening she sate in the rotunda at the feet of Linnæus, reading with an attention that proved her to be drawing life from the book. A moth, deeply occupied by the same pursuit, sate with powdery wings upon the margin of the page, and worked on Plato's Republic. Socrates looked down upon them from his high pedestal, and beside them smiled Hebe, calm and unsorrowing. Socrates endeavours to lead his disciples nearer to the contemplation of good, and Adeimantos asks, "And yet thou dost not call it pleasure?"

Socrates replies, "Sin not! but contemplate yet nearer its image."

Wonderful thoughts rose with this in the soul of Angelica; presentiments which she could not comprehend. She looked up to the god-like forms in marble which surrounded her, but they struck her at that moment as pale and dumb. The room became narrow and suffocating; she opened the doors which led from the rotunda to the terrace, and contemplating the sea of fire in the west, where the sun was now calmly descending, let the cool evening wind play on her cheeks and her hair. She did not observe that a portion of the company had collected in the rotunda, that they looked at her with amazement, and wondered at the book which she had laid down open upon the knee of the great philosopher of nature.

"I cannot conceive what she can do with such a book," said some one; "will it teach her to paint better?"

"I really think it will," said Count Alarik, smiling.

"I think I understand your meaning," said Countess Natalie; "but is it not the fortunate prerogative of genius to know without being compelled to learn—to produce what is heavenly without searching after it? The genial artist creates the beautiful without even understanding it."

"But not without feeling it," answered Count Alarik, "deeply feeling it in his own soul. The artist does not labour like the bee—he knows what he does; his power is

not that of instinct, but that of a waking, conscious spirit. He is not blind, he is *clair-voyant*."

"But precisely this spirit, is it not the immediate gift of heaven? Is not this divine fire innate in the artist's soul, and has nothing to receive from the earth? Genius is baptized with fire—baptized to independent power, for ever drawing from the treasury of his own inward wealth, for ever creating like a god. It possesses life in itself, and is independent of all things."

"Not independent of all things," returned Count Alarik. "Even the heavenly flame must go out, if knowledge and love do not supply their nourishment. What is it that the artist endeavours to represent, when he understands his vocation and strives after the Highest? Is it not the fulness of life which is in spirit and in nature? But, in order to be fully possessed of this, and to be fully possessed by it, he must descend into it, and take it to himself. Is it not precisely because the seed mingles itself with the elements that it develops its inward world in growth and flower? Happy the young artist who is consecrated by philosophy to those mysteries which by mighty works he aims at revealing; happy if an ennobling love expands and warms his soul! His native land shall then listen with joy and thankfulness to his songs, or contemplate his pictures; and not, as now, lament justly that time brings forth merely buds, but no flowers; that so many beautiful lights are kindled, and almost at the same moment again extinguished."

Count Alarik stepped back after he had spoken these words, and his eye rested on Adelaide, who had brought in Angelica from the terrace.

Miss Greta shut the doors, speaking in a half-loud tone of ecstasies, and coughs and colds.

Angelica seated herself, and, with her head resting on her hand, regarded the speakers in turn.

"If love help to paint and poetize," said a gentleman of the company, "marriage is certain death to these talents. I assure you that as an unmarried man I made verses equal to Franzén and Tegnér; but now—wife and children, agriculture, rearing sheep, and heaven knows what—I assure you they dry up the richest vein."

Countess Natalie remarked drily that both Franzén and Tegnér were married men, and held important civil offices.

"With regard to philosophy and Platonic love," said Hugo L——, with his glowing and impure glance, "I shall take good care not to load and depress my fancy with these burdens. A glowing, free, and untrammelled fancy, this is the artist's true wealth. With this will he reach the one thing which is alone worth striving after. He can flatter the sensuality and the vanity of mankind, and win much—money!"

"Money!" exclaimed Countess Natalie, with astonishment and contempt.

"Means of enjoyment," said Hugo, smiling.

"I think," said an elderly lady with a mild countenance, "that God gave the fine arts to man in order to heighten his enjoyment of life; and I do not see why one should seek a higher object for them. When I see in my room beautiful landscapes, charming family-pictures—when I see around me portraits of my children, or of friends whom I have loved and lost—then I value the artist, and thank God for the gift of the art."

"The creative art," said an old gentleman positively, "has no value in the long run for man, unless it reproduces his favourite objects. It is of value to you, gracious lady, when it gives portraits of your friends; I myself buy no pictures which do not represent horses; and my brother Gustavus will not look at a painting unless it offer him cheese, butter, bread, and a good glass of ale. Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Generally speaking," said another person, "the highest object of art should be faithfully to represent scenes of real life: in this way alone can art become useful and valuable to man, since in this way it has truth on its side, and the fancy is not bewildered by images of angels or devils, which only serve to make one fanatic or terrified at ghosts. Thus, success to the Flemish school!"

"For my part," said the rich von S., "I would not give two stivers for those who either paint life or put it into verse. I know a little about genius, having such a piece of goods for my son; and humbly give thanks for that—which is good for nothing."

"Perhaps exactly because it is 'such a piece of goods,'" whispered Miss Greta to Countess Natalie.

"But in truth," asked the Countess, "if art be so little, what then is genius?"

"A brilliant meteor," said a bright head.

"Why does the earth pay homage to it as to a god?" asked some one.

"Man loves the light that dazzles him," said the Countess; "and I think, that after a calm examination, it would be difficult to say whether genius actually has been of any benefit to the world. The industrious citizen, the tranquil thinker, the good man, work more for the well-being of society at large than the most brilliant genius."

"We will look at this a little nearer," said Countess Natalie; "let us inquire now what genius has done for the world and for mankind." With these words she looked at Angelica, and all eyes were at once turned on the young girl, who seemed to be influenced by an extraordinary emotion. She had risen from her seat, and went with gentle steps forward into the circle of people who had gathered round an altar of variegated marble, which occupied the centre of the rotunda, and upon which was placed the lute-player of Thorwaldsen. Her countenance became paler and paler; her eye gleamed darkly, a light shudder passed through her delicate frame, and she was obliged to support herself against the altar, where she stood for a moment, and appeared as if listening to words which were inaudible to other ears. All looked at her with astonishment, except Miss Greta, who turned away with an expression of displeasure, saying to herself, as she withdrew, "What purpose can this answer? I cannot endure such things—and yet I like the girl, notwithstanding."

Count Alarik advanced to the young enthusiast, and repeated with a voice which demanded an answer, Countess Natalie's question—"Tell us, Angelica, what does genius do for the world?"

Angelica looked at him; her eyes appeared larger than common, they glanced quickly round, her breast heaved, and her eyes filled with tears. Her soul was too full; she suffered, and was overcome by the mighty spirit within her.

At length she spoke, but it was not calmly; her thoughts came lightning-like, and in broken, disordered phrases.

“It gives joy, joy to the world! joy to every human soul! Light in the past, strength in the present, and hope for the future!

“Have you seen the graves and the ruins of the earth? Have you seen races of men and thrones disappear? seen how they who have performed heroic deeds and works of love have sunk into the silent grave; how ashes cover the magnificent temple; how mists lie dreamingly on the tombs of heroes; how all, all pass away from existence?

“But who is he, that with a flaming glance dissipates the mist, and makes the dead rise again in renewed forms? The immortal bard, who preserves the memory of nations; who sings their combats, their victories, their wounds, their acquired treasures, and makes one period the inheritor of another! who makes us weep over the sorrows and rejoice at the glory of a thousand years ago? Clear dawn over a world else sunk in darkness—Genius, that art thou!

“When Genius speaks, the breast of the people expands; it breathes higher and freer; actions of goodness and of bravery are the re-echo of his words through a thousand years. When Genius speaks, the hearts of the people throb, and immortal words which lay there slumbering, awake. Mankind looks upward, recognises his nobler self, and becomes better, kinder, and happier!

“And when a people bleed, when a deep wound has been given to its heart; when it seems as if its strength, its freedom, its noblest life, must perish under the hand of the executioner, who is it that yet speaks of better days, that raises again the fallen eagle, and lets his eye turn towards that of the eternal sun? Comforter of the fallen, seer and prophet of the secrets of God, Genius, hail to thee!

“Deep mists gather over the earth. There are autumn nights in which every star is hidden in heaven, in which the heart of man sickens at life, at himself, at all around him. No animating feeling dwells in his inmost soul; no tear is in his eye; wherever he turns is night—and the night is peopled with dark and hideous shadows—the very air which he breathes suffocates! But see! who lightens from the

cloud and makes the night clear; and reveals the fair genii who had hidden behind the cloud, and now beckon to him and smile? It is Genius—it is the great artist! His lightning-beam has touched the heart of the unhappy; he has wept and is comforted; yet one more beam, one more celestial vision, and he looks upward with strength and hope!

“Who is it that glorifies nature? Who is it that understands her language, reads the quiet hymns of the flowers, and seizes upon thought in the bird’s song? Who is it that hears the spirits of the mountains and the floods; that hears the voice of the Almighty in the rolling thunder, in the murmuring forest, and interprets for man God’s word in nature?”

“Thou marvel, thou life in life, though mighty hand that linkest time with eternity; ever renewing, ever producing power; thou who seest the path of the sun and the working of the heart of man; thou who searchest out the essence of the Divinity, and the life of the little flower—we comprehend thee not, but we know well whom thou art!

“Man fell—mind lost itself in dim dreams; but allow him the gladness of a higher existence, O then scattered traces are collected in a heavenly smile, the misty shadows of his dreams assume shape and colouring, and all his recollections stand forth to illumine—a beam of God’s light—Genius smiles over the earth, and ennobles its dark reality.

’Tis genius heaven’s unclouded light beholds,
And god-like visions to the world unfolds!”

At this moment a religious man stepped forward from the circle that surrounded Angelica. His face was young but pale, and its expression was severe. He spoke with a deep and serious voice.

“The earth,” said he, “is the home of sin—the earth is the valley of tears. Woe to genius if it forget its own appropriate vocation, that of the voice of God to a fallen world; if it forget to depict to man his sin in lines of fire, and to admonish him to repentance and amendment. Woe to it, if like the serpent in nature it allure to joy and to deceitful pride; if it cry, ‘peace!’ where it should cry, ‘humble yourselves and repent!’ Oh, what are we, indeed, that God should smile upon us? Sinners! sinners! Who can prefigure to himself what holy heaven is, without feeling the abyss in which he himself stands? There is only one sub-

ject for genius and art on earth—one only is there which is conformable to man's condition here—the crucified Saviour!"

"Oh, no! The Saviour has arisen!" exclaimed Angelica with a transported smile; "joy, joy to the earth eternally! It is not pain, it is not anguish, which makes free and reconciles—it is love, it is beauty! Depict heaven truly, and man will live for it. Place upon earth the image of a God, and man will love it, and approach nearer to the prototype!"

"It is pitiable, it is the mad folly of a fallen being," said the former speaker, "to imagine that he can comprehend the likeness of the hidden One; it is to tempt God!"

"But if he gives himself to man?" asked Angelica with an inspired glance; "God suffered on the cross for sinners. He will not refuse to reveal his glory to such as draw near to him in pious adoration. Is not the vocation of genius, as well as art, that of a mediator? Phidias and Raphael, Milton and Tegnér, Handel and Mozart, have decreased the distance between heaven and earth! The vocation of genius is more important in this our time than any other. Who has not heard that in the hour of the Great Sacrifice the veil of the temple was rent asunder? Now the pious eye can penetrate the holy of holies, and it is given to the artist again and yet again to reveal God to the world! He ought to strive unpausingly after the highest; with love, with labour, with prayer, with earthly and with heavenly strength! O grant to me for the labour of a whole life only one moment of divine revelation, and only breath enough to declare it to the world—and I have lived enough!"

"Blessed are they whom God's lightnings transpierce!" continued Angelica, with increasing yet ever calmer inspiration. "Blessed they who give forth this lightning to the world, and then die! Who is the happy, the great, the enviable, on earth? Is it not he who gives to human nature that enlightened beauty which he drew from its breast; who, borne upwards by his genius, ascends to heaven to fetch thence fire with which he will kindle the nations?"

"A human life—a little human life—a life of a few years—and to live in this for an immortality—to breathe fire into the hearts of millions of human beings—a human life—so little and yet so vast! How wonderful! how glorious! How

sweet the lot to live for a world and to die for the immortally beautiful on earth! O that it might be mine!"

Tears of ardent longing streamed down the now glowing cheeks of Angelica.

"Is it for renown?" asked Count Alarik, with a searching glance.

"And would this renown make you happier, Angelica?" inquired the elderly lady with the gentle countenance; "would it here make you more beloved by your friends? would you actually, with all this striving for millions, make one human being happier? O Angelica! is there, indeed, a nobler lot on earth, a lot which is more worthy to be striven after by a woman's heart, than that of being the whole and entire happiness of one being?"

Angelica looked first at one and then at the other of the speakers; a cloud dimmed her brow, but it quickly passed, and she said to Count Alarik, "No, not for the sake of renown. If I should ever succeed in producing a masterpiece, and time, or the hand of an enemy, should efface my name from the picture, I would not complain if the work of my hand and of my spirit lived only for mankind."

To the elderly lady she said, with a low voice and a look of humility, "I do not know whether I should be happy; I only know one thing, that I must obey the voice which requires from me that I should strive after the immortal in art. God must dispose my fate as He sees best!"

"And have you weighed," asked Count Alarik, advancing towards her, "all the difficulties of your path? General opinion, poverty, your sex, which prevents the acquisition of a grounded knowledge—all, all will retard your steps. Listen to wiser counsel, Angelica. Direct yourself according to the taste and the circumstances of the times. Do not strive to attain to the ideal; paint portraits, little scenes out of every-day life, and you will become rich, will live tranquil, loved, and esteemed."

"I can endure hunger," said Angelica, looking at him calmly and fixedly; "and the censure of the world I do not hear; it would be overpowered by a mightier voice within my own breast. Striving after the highest only will I live!"

"And if you should fail? if you should be deceived in your own powers?"

"Then may God be merciful to me, and let me die!"

"And wherefore this ambition? A less degree of perfection also gives joy, and the good and the beautiful live also in the humbler spheres of life, and there are they more accessible."

"The highest! the highest!" exclaimed Angelica; "I will live and die striving after the highest!"

"You have the true artist-soul," said Count Alarik delighted, and clasping her slender waist, he lifted her standing upon the altar. The lute-player sate with a heavenly smile at her feet, as if ready to sing her praises. A murmur of approbation and pleasure was heard from the bystanders.

CHAPTER IV.

ADVENTURES.

Nature ordains both tears and smiles.

To banish laughter were unwise

When so much that's jocose one hears;

And 'twere a crime to bind the eyes,

When human sufferings ask for tears.—KELGREN.

DANCING-MUSIC sounded in the great hall. Young Otto was storming through the country-dance with Adelaide, whilst the Baroness and the President were hopping gently down the middle and back again, through cross-hands and promenade. His Excellency moved along with dignified elegance beside the beautiful and proud Countess Natalie, whilst with noble and simple grace Count Alarik and Countess Augusta went through the mazes of the dance. Angelica slept unremarked from the ball-room, where, at first, she had entered with the rest. She experienced the same uneasy and violent emotions which were consequent on every uncommon expression of her feelings, and she sought therefore quiet and solitude. In the library all was still. The lamp had gone out, and the bright September moon shone in through the window, bathing the flowers and the statues with its mild bluish light. The hum and music from the dancing-room sounded distant and indistinct; and through an open window was heard the song of the cricket in the dewy grass, and a soft perfume arose and diffused itself from the night-blowing violets on the terrace.

In this quiet world the storm in Angelica's soul gradually

subsided into still and melancholy feeling. It was the heaving after the tempest. Her thoughts were not arranged; but a dim desire, a deep longing, operated in her heart that she might repose herself on the bosom of a mother, or a female friend. Her heart was now so warm; she felt so intimately the want of tenderness; she kissed the moonbeam as it fell upon the flowers in her window, and looking up to the evening star, she said, "Oh, that thou wert a genie, thou beautiful star, that by my prayers I might entice thee down from the vault of heaven; that I might kiss thy beaming forehead, and clasp thee to my heart!"

The star twinkled, unalterable, bright and friendly from the azure-dome.

"Thou tellest me," continued Angelica, "that thou art possessed of a better home, and thou art right!" She turned her eyes to the earth, which lay in the mild light of heaven, so beautiful, so tranquil, so consoling, so like a mother who opens her arms to her weary children.

Angelica felt this; her eyes filled with tears, and stretching forth her arms she said softly, "I am tired, I suffer! Oh, that I might repose my head upon a mother's bosom, and slumbering for a moment, wake to redoubled life!"

"Let me be thy mother and thy friend! Rest upon me, I will support thee!" said an unusually sweet voice close to Angelica; and Countess Natalie seizing her hand pressed it between hers, and continued with tearful eyes, "Permit me only to love you, admirable young girl; leave to me the care of your life and your happiness!"

"Could the great even love the poor?" asked Angelica, withdrawing her hand, and with a look full of mistrust. "I have been told that they merely look coldly down upon them, as that star looks on us. I have been told that they merely out of self-interest occasionally elevate them to their own height, in order that by the splendour of God's gifts to an inferior they may increase their own happiness. I have been told that the bread they give is bitter; that for a few friendly words they demand the sacrifice of a whole life——"

"Ah, think not so, Angelica!" interrupted the Countess; "this is only the language of bitter prejudice. Who can have poisoned your young beautiful soul with such a creed?"

“An early—a bitter experience,” replied Angelica. “The lofty ones of the earth cannot understand what want, what suffering is! They know not how a noble nature feels in being compelled, like the worm of the earth, to crawl after its food, when it has not strength to suffer hunger!—to be compelled, for a few crumbs of bread, to flatter what they despise, or else to starve! Life moves around the wealthy with so much grace, so much pomp and beauty; they drink of the sweetest wine of existence, and dance under a delicious intoxication. They find nothing in themselves which permits them to understand the actual sufferings of the poor. They throw out corn with a liberal hand to the little sparrows; they take up the worm from the earth that it may lighten their rooms in dark evenings; but they love only themselves, they see mankind only in their own circles.”

“How unjust you are, Angelica!” exclaimed Countess Natalie with noble indignation. “You describe the barbarous opinions of an age which is long passed. It is true, I will not deny it, that there is enjoyment in standing in a position in life above the multitude, and with a glance of kindly pride looking down on those who look up to us; yes, and there may be a great enjoyment found even in humbling others; yet there is a greater——”

“And what is that?”

“In humbling oneself. In bending the knee before a higher power; and feeling oneself, with all the splendour that the world can give, poor in comparison of him in whom the spirit of God abides. Ah, Angelica! that longing, that ardent desire towards a higher spirit, may dwell even in the hearts of those who are surrounded by the world’s wealth and show; and these, if a beam of God reveal itself, can willingly leave all, and resign all, only to worship and to follow.”

Angelica stood silent and reserved; and with increasing emotion the Countess continued, “I should not have ventured to approach you, Angelica; I could not have understood how to admire and love you if I had been one of those cold, weak beings whom you have described. From the first moment in which I saw and heard you, I longed most earnestly to become your friend—your sister; in truth, Angelica, I am not unworthy of you!”

Still the painter's daughter stood silent, and her eye passed over the landscape, now veiled in deep twilight.

"I have been weak," continued the Countess, "I have been vain, I have been dazzled by a worldly life, but I have never been its slave. I understood and I yearned after a higher excellence, but I never saw it in actuality till this moment; until this moment I never looked up to any human being."

Countess Natalie approached Angelica yet nearer, and spoke with touching sincerity.

"Do not reject me!" said she; "do not strike back my outstretched hand. Let me be your elder sister; let me be your motherly friend. I will accompany you where you will; I will conduct you where you will. Your interests shall become mine; your glory and your happiness shall be mine. I will be your strengthener and your supporter, and I will watch over your peace in the small events of life as well as in the great. You shall live entirely for art, and I will live entirely for you. I am rich, and alone in the world. God, until this moment, has given me nothing that I could love, nothing for which I could live with joy!—Angelica, have I deceived myself?"

Still Angelica made no reply.

"I feel at this moment," said the Countess, "as if I could beg for friendship, if it is to be had by prayers,—but I cannot compel your feelings; and if these are adverse to me, nothing that I can offer will avail. Angelica, your silence tells me that you cannot have confidence in me—that you cannot love me!"

"O, I can!" said Angelica, and turned her tearful eyes on the Countess; "I could have loved you from the first moment I saw you, but I feared——"

"What, what did you fear?"

"To be again deceived," returned Angelica; "to lose my independence without gaining a friend."

"And now, do you yet fear?" asked the Countess, as she again took Angelica's hand between hers. "Will you let me love you; will you leave in my hands the care for your life?"

Angelica looked at her with tearful eyes, but made no answer.

"I will not be pressing," said the Countess, "but I will

return. Now say one kind word to me, one friendly *thou* before I go.”*

“Trallala, trallala!” sung the President, who entered now with a *chassé*; “my gracious Countess, the waltz has already commenced, and I have your promise.”

“I shall keep it,” answered the Countess, gave her hand to Angelica, and hearing from her lips the desired word, allowed herself to be conducted to the dance by the President, who was rather captivated this evening.

Angelica was deeply excited. She scarcely dared to believe that the so long desired friend had at length been given to her. She did not dare to cast a glance into the future that opened before her; she leant against a statue of Minerva, and cooled her burning cheek on the marble, whilst her tears flowed abundantly.

“Press not thy warm heart against the cold marble, beautiful girl! Let it be pressed to a heart which burns for thee!” said a voice, which Angelica recognised as belonging to Hugo L——, and catching her in his arms he clasped her to his bosom. Angelica endeavoured to free herself with a cry of alarm.

“Visionary, with your ideal world!” said Hugo; “I will make you acquainted with the heaven of love, and——”

“Have done with such attempts, sir! They will bring you into scrapes on earth,” said a stern voice, as a tall black figure moved from behind the Minerva, and laid a heavy hand on Hugo’s arm. It was Miss Greta: Angelica was free. Hugo stood ashamed and enraged.

“Leave this place, sir!” said Miss Greta, imperiously; “and if you think proper to depart before to-morrow morning, I will undertake to make your compliments to their Excellencies!”

“Do not give yourself the trouble, my lady,” answered Hugo; “I prefer attending to my own business;” and with these words he withdrew, whistling.

“An impertinent being!” said Miss Greta. “But my Angelica,” continued she, half jestingly and half displeased,

* It is almost needless to remark here, that *thee* and *thou* are used in Sweden as in Germany in the intercourse of near and dear friends. To make use of these pronouns is to acknowledge love or friendship. M. H.

“why will you go wandering about in the moonlight like a heroine of romance? See now, do not take it so terribly! do not shake like an aspen leaf! Follow me, and calm yourself with a glass of lemonade; and don't, another time, go and lean against marble images, which only give one the ague, without lifting an arm to defend one if improper people come and want to kiss and make heavenward flights;” and so saying, she took the trembling girl with her, and made her drink one glass of lemonade after another.

In the mean time I sate and delighted myself with Angelica and her dancing. Life, grace, and joy, beamed from her; she was the object of universal admiration and homage. She accepted the proofs of homage without arrogance, but as a due tribute, as something quite natural, and became more calm exactly in proportion as the others became more lively. I saw with sincere delight that she was not the victim of flattery, although, as was but natural, it was pleasing to her.

It was with sorrow that I saw Edla sitting silent and forgotten. She had not been engaged since the first dance, when the Baroness had obtained her a partner. I seated myself beside her, and endeavoured to draw her into conversation; but she either made me no reply at all, or else only answered short and drily. Soon afterwards, I heard Adelaide say to Otto in a tone of reproof—

“Why has not Edla danced? You promised me to engage her.”

“Heavens! I have asked her, but she will not dance, she says.”

“You ought to have begged and prayed so long that she should have said yes.”

“My sweetest Adelaide, I cannot. It is not so uncommonly agreeable that I should beg for it.”

“But you shall, Otto, if I wish it. Now go to her this minute, and don't leave off till you have made her promise to dance the next quadrille with you.”

“Our dance! The dance that you have promised to me?”

“That very one! and after that you shall introduce Mr. S. to her.”

“No, I thank you! I beg to dispense with all that. He says she is as ugly and wearisome as——”

“Otto, Otto! what dreadful things you say! Go now,

Otto, and do as I say. Wait! it is best that you dance two dances with Edla."

"Is not one enough?" asked Otto with a deplorable countenance.

"No; you must dance two."

"Ah, thou most heavenly one! I must obey all that thou commandest. But what shall I get for it, Adelaide? What shall I afterwards get?"

"Hush! hush! it is so hateful to be selfish!"

"Shall I not get the flower that you have in your hair? shall I not get that afterwards?"

"No! Go now, make haste, Otto; they are tuning already."

"I will not go, unless you promise me the flower!"

"You shall have it, obstinate being! Go now, only go!"

Count Alarik had his large eyes fixed on the cousins during their conversation, and when he saw Adelaide disengaged, he went and seated himself by her, and heard her, with singular satisfaction, refuse all invitations for the next dance. Their conversation speedily became lively, and his serious countenance lightened up the while as by an irresistible enchantment.

After this he talked long with Countess Natalie, and hearing them several times mention Angelica's name, and "journey to Rome," together with other words, I judged that the Countess proposed taking the young girl to the birthplace of the arts, where she might unrestrainedly develop her powers.

Miss Greta, whom I had the honour of having for my neighbour, cast disquiet and displeased glances at the speakers. "Heaven knows," said she, "what they are concocting together, but I fear me it must be something indigestible!"

Among the guests was a lady from the neighbourhood, who attracted every one's attention by her dancing. When she figured in the quadrille, she stretched forth one foot in the air while she hopped on the other, one might have thought that she designed to kick away her *vis-à-vis*; in addition to this she made such high *entre-chats*, such extraordinary leaps and springs, that her curls flew around her head like the snakes on the Furies. This personage excited indescribable amusement among the company, and looked all the more

remarkable, as during her wild dancing she preserved an imperturbably grave countenance, which was no longer youthful nor sprightly. Some said that she danced in order to give herself exercise, and the gentlemen were at some pains that she should have it. Some said that she was storming a heart; others that she was a little insane. Those who were the most amused by her, were the young ladies, and they laughed continually and whispered among themselves. I was astonished, when between the dances I saw Adelaide with the skipping lady arm-in-arm leave the dancing-room. I stole softly after them, and unobserved, heard Adelaide say to her with the most charming candour, that her dancing was now very uncommon and excited much surprise; that it was now the fashion scarcely to do more than walk in dancing, and to this intimation she added a little dancing-lesson. The lady, who had hitherto been distracted by the large assembly, the lights, and the dancing, had paid no attention to anything around her, was now at the same moment embarrassed and grateful for Adelaide's instructions. But Adelaide was so earnest and serious, so well-meaning and sweet, that the embarrassment soon vanished; and then, while Adelaide re-arranged her pupil's danced-down head-dress, she asked her very unceremoniously for more lessons, hoped for a nearer acquaintance, lamented over the difficulty of getting masters in the country, etc., etc.

Charming Adelaide! you know not how this proof of your good-heartedness and single-mindedness attracted my heart to you.

The company in the ball-room were not a little surprised when they saw the recently stormy lady re-enter the dance like a totally different person, and move about as quietly as she had formerly been riotous. "It is witchcraft!" thought everybody; and Count Alarik directed a look on the lovely enchantress, which plainly showed that he understood very well how the matter stood. I could not deny myself the pleasure of relating this little scene to Miss Greta, who had been excessively amused with the eccentric dancer. I remarked on her delicate lips an expression of pleasure; which, however, she did not utter, but merely said, "Adelaide had better take care, or she will have the lady sticking to her like a burr."

"How?" said I somewhat hastily, "if she for a little service win a person's entire devotion, should she not be glad and grateful? Ah, Miss Greta, is not the gift of a heart the most precious offering that fortune can make us?"

"My best Mamselle," replied Miss Greta, "that may all be very good and charmingly beautiful, and I wish you all the hearts in the world; but as far as I am concerned, I would rather have people altogether off my hands—I like much better to amuse myself with them."

"Well, well, Miss Greta," thought I, a little offended, "I certainly shall not trouble you with my friendship."

There was a young man among the guests who made himself remarkable in a very different way to the before-mentioned lady, for he was as timorous as she was bold. Notwithstanding the uniform which he wore, he was so uncommonly embarrassed that he seemed not to know if he were to sit or to walk or to stand. It was a critical moment for him when almost every one seated themselves, and he alone was left standing before some young girls; and so much was he put out of countenance by the intelligent glances which they cast the one at the other, that his hat fell from his trembling hand, and heaven knows if he would not have fallen himself had not Adelaide, by a quick movement, made room for him between herself and one of her friends, and then addressing him by his name offered him the seat beside her. To dissipate his embarrassment, she began to talk to him with such affability and kindness, that the young ensign soon looked quite proud and happy.

Miss Greta observed all this, and an almost imperceptible but sarcastic smile played round her mouth. I looked at her inquiringly. "Adelaide," whispered she to me smilingly, "will soon have a lover: that young man thinks unquestionably that she is in love with him!"

Later in the evening, when the company began to take their departure in the beautiful moonlight, I heard Adelaide's dancing lady say, "Ah, where is my good friend Adelaide? I must bid her good night, else she will be angry with me."

"O ho! have you become such intimate friends?" asked her mamma.

"Yes to be sure. My stars!" and discovering Adelaide in the crowd, she ran up to her exclaiming, "Ah, be so good

and come and see us soon, my sweet young lady—and we may be *thou* together, and good friends;—is it not so? or else take care you will get into a scrape!”

So saying she held up her forefinger threateningly, and then hurrying away in her short cloak, made again some extraordinary leaps.

Miss Greta, who heard and saw all, gave me a glance which said, “Well, and what did I say?” and at the same time she showed her teeth, beautiful and white as pearls.

Before he went to bed that same evening, the young ensign wrote thus to his dear brother :

“I amuse myself famously here, my dear Jack. Fine girls, Jack! very fine girls! and not at all cruel, at least towards certain people. Well, certain people have really luck with women. This evening at a ball at the G——’s, there was a certain young beauty—of whom no doubt I shall have hereafter more to relate—I say a certain young beauty made such advances towards me that I was a little embarrassed for her. I could not be rude; besides, she is lovely enough to soften any man; and if she be constant and steady—who knows?—she might by possibility be the right one among many. But I really am sorry for Lotta S., and Agatha B., and little Minchen—my poor Minchen! But, in heaven’s name! one cannot marry all the handsome girls one meets. One cannot help being the favourite of the women.

“Good night, Jack; I am now going to lay myself to sleep, and dream of my fine girl, and that she calls me, as she did this evening, to come and sit beside her. The sweet creature!

“Your ever attached brother,

“C. S.”

This note, of which I obtained the knowledge in a singular manner, together with the dancing lady’s conduct, showed me the misconstruction and mistakes which goodness and kind-heartedness often may give rise to. I spoke to Adelaide on the subject.

She blushed and laughed; “one must risk something to gain something,” said she. “They both however were saved from general ridicule, and I have not suffered much.”

Hugo L. did not find it advisable to take his departure the next morning; but Miss Greta’s severe glance kept him in

order, so that he did not venture to approach Angelica; to make up for it now, however, he seemed to have turned his devotions to Adelaide, which soon brought down upon him Count Alarik's argus eyes.

Miss Greta lay on a sofa and trimmed her nails with a little pair of tongs, and exactly as the clock struck twelve put on her five little gold watches, which her waiting woman handed to her silently and respectfully, when some one came to propose a walk to her with a part of the company.

"What is the use of it?" demanded Miss Greta, who was no great friend of walks and fine scenery. The weather was too warm, too cold; she had no wish for it, etc., etc. But they told her that the weather was delicious, and that they should not go far; only just a little turn in the park; so at last she allowed herself to be persuaded. Count Alarik played billiards with Countess Augusta, and Adelaide and Countess Natalie were detained by his Excellency in the hot-house.

Miss Greta was not in the best of humours, and it did not particularly please her to find that her walking companion was Miss Pelan—called by her acquaintance Pellan, who was continually getting into ecstasies with everything that she saw. On her part, however, she had a great fancy for Miss Greta, who was by no means flattered by it.

"Gracious! how beautiful it is here!" exclaimed Miss Pelan; "what masses of trees! what a variety of green! what a serene sky! Ah, dearest Miss Greta, is it not here like Eden?"

"I do not know; I never was there!" answered Miss Greta drily.

Some of the company, but I know not who, turned the conversation on self-sacrifices. The greater number declared that nothing was easier than the performance of these so-much-extolled actions; that it was perfectly natural to give one's life, one's comfort, for one's friend—nay, even for one's enemy. No one was more zealous about self-sacrifice than Miss Pelan. She declared that she should quite despise herself if she could hesitate even for a moment in risking her life to save that of a fellow-creature. "What is the body?" said she, "but a garment which sooner or later one must cast off?" and at this she shook herself; "should one hesitate a

moment in exposing it to danger if a higher duty demanded it? Impossible! for me, at least, impossible!"

Miss Greta was the only one who said not a word.

We now came to a little opening. At the foot of a rock we saw a slender white figure lying under the trees among the flowers of the grass. We instantly recognised Angelica by her lovely hair; she slept with her head resting on her arm, and a book beside her. Every one exclaimed at the beautiful sight, and at the romance of it; they could fancy themselves in the fairest days of poesy, when the nymphs of the wood revealed themselves to mortals.

"I wish her joy of the many insects that will be crawling on her," said Miss Greta.

At this moment we heard a horrible roaring, and an infuriated bull, with fiery eyes and bloody muzzle, dashed through the brushwood towards the company on the very side where Angelica lay. Everybody fled in haste and terror without thinking of Angelica, and nobody fled so hastily and sprang so desperately over stocks and stones as Miss Pelan; nay, indeed, she pushed aside her friend Miss Greta, and made a leap over Angelica, whom she must have mistaken for a block of wood. Miss Greta alone ran to Angelica, and called upon her to save herself. Angelica sprang up, light as a young roe, but at the same moment sprained her ankle, and could not advance another step. Pale as death she re-seated herself on the grass.

"Run, for heaven's sake, fly!" exclaimed Miss Greta. "Are you bewitched? Quick, quick! make haste!"

"I cannot; I have sprained my foot!" said Angelica in a trembling voice.

"Indeed! in the name of heaven!" said Miss Greta.

The bull came now upon them with full fury, and at that moment Miss Greta, becoming at once perfectly calm, placed herself between Angelica and the maddened animal, and took off her shawl, as she said to herself, "I cannot say that I should find it at all pleasant to be tossed!"

The next instant the bull, with stooping head, dashed towards them, and with admirable presence of mind she threw her red shawl over his horns, so that he took a leap on the other side of Angelica, and, blinded and raging, hurried onwards.

Fearless and calm, Miss Greta turned now to Angelica, who had nearly fainted from pain, and taking her like a child in her arms, carried her hastily into the wood. When she had gone some distance, and the roaring of the bull was no longer to be heard, she seated herself to rest with her burden upon a stone, and with moist eyes pressed the rescued girl to her breast, and kissed the soft silky curls which shaded her brow. When she again set forward on her way she met Miss Pelan, who was running about the wood like a stray sheep. She had lost her way and was distracted with terror, and hurriedly inquired from Miss Greta which was the way back to the house. Miss Greta, however, instead of answering her, ordered her to assist in carrying Angelica; and Miss Pelan obeyed, complaining and trembling the while.

"We shall all three be killed," said she mournfully.

"In heaven's name!" said Miss Greta, "we do our duty, and our Lord will take care of the rest."

"But I don't want to be gored!" exclaimed Miss Pelan, ready to run away.

"Stay where you are and follow me," and Miss Greta commandingly. "Ah! what are our bodies that we should hesitate to sacrifice them when our duty demands it? What is the body, Miss Pelan? A garment sooner or later to be cast off!" With this she laughed heartily, and could not deny herself every now and then during the way the pleasure of entertaining Pelan with her own fine phrases.

At length they reached home, and Angelica's accident occasioned the greatest commotion. Miss Pelan related to everybody, in the most exaggerated manner, the dangers she had gone through. Miss Greta sent off a messenger for the doctor; and then, having with motherly care helped Angelica to bed, related the whole affair laconically, and with a deal of comic humour; laughed at it herself, and made every one laugh too with the exception of Countess Natalie, who, pale and uneasy, sate by Angelica's pillow.

Miss Greta seemed to see with displeasure their growing intimacy, and one day she came with an air of great dissatisfaction out of Angelica's room, who was now a great deal better. "See there," said she, "now, they two are going to set off to Rome, and they will come back again so cultivated, and with such exalted notions, that there will be no speaking

to them. I hope, however, that old Plomgren, Angelica's father, will be sensible enough to refuse his consent."

The Countess Natalie, who, notwithstanding all her pride, was a little afraid of Miss Greta, and who was accustomed often to be governed by her determined will, took all possible pains to reconcile her to this journey to Rome, but in vain; all that she could gain was that, at last, Miss Greta only laughed at the expedition, instead of being angry about it.

We had now been nearly fourteen days at his Excellency's, and the President began to be impatient for our departure. Countess Natalie M. was so entirely occupied with Angelica, that she had no attention to spare for any one else; and the increasing interest which his daughters took in this extraordinary young girl began to make him uneasy.

"It is time that we depart," said he to me the evening before our journey, "else the girls may become as crazed as this Angelica. Genius may be a very good thing," added he, after a moment's pause; "but to step forward and make long speeches full of ahs! and ohs! and to lay oneself in the way of bulls, this puts me in mind of a well-known proverb—'One is no genius because one is not mad.'"

Later in the evening I sate in the drawing-room window, thinking over the words of the President, and what he really meant when he called Angelica "crazed." I thought on the great dissimilarity between human beings, and how very little they understand of life in each other. Angelica had excited a great interest even in me; and I endeavoured to make clear to myself life in that young, ardent, and striving spirit. It appeared to me like nature itself at that moment. The heaven was covered with clouds, out of which here and there gleamed forth a star clear as Angelica's eyes; the horizon was wrapped in a thick haze, but now and then a bright flash of lightning shot up its wings of fire, and embraced the firmament. Thus endeavours Thought in the human soul to free itself; thus it lightens forth and sinks again into cloud; thus it flames up again in hours of darkness, illumines the midnight landscape, and meets the rosy hue of morning. These lightnings are the deep breathings of the soul in the oppressive atmosphere of earth! O Almighty Father! they are the attempts of the struggling spirit to approach thee!

At this moment I heard some one preluding on the organ in the library, and Angelica's deep contralto sounded clear and beautiful through the silence. She sang with calm and clear inspiration :

I thirst! Oh, give me of the swelling stream
Which waters distant Eden's happy land,
Whose sacred waves like liquid silver gleam,
Where holy angels linger on the strand.
It is the fount of bright eternal youth;
Its source is that of wisdom and of truth!

I thirst! Oh, fountain of Eternal Good,
Give life, give freshness to this fevered blood;
Give this sick bosom health, and strength, and ease;
Blot from mine eyes these searing fantasies.
Oh, let me quench my burning thirst, and be
A heaven-reflecting mirror like to thee!

I thirst! O God! this ardent prayer thou hearest,
Who endless life within thy bosom bearest,
Give to my lips a drop in mercy kind—
In this vain world no healing draught they find;
Its tepid flood gives no relief to me,
I thirst for immortality and Thee!

The song ceased. I had approached the library-door, which stood open, and saw Angelica bend her head in her hands, while a sudden flash covered her with light.

"May it be a prophecy!" said I in my heart. A dark shadow moved in the library, and came straight towards me with a pocket-handkerchief before its eyes, and as some one pushed against me I recognised Miss Greta.

The President and his family were already in winter quarters in town, when we received a flying visit from Countess Natalie and Angelica. They were on the point of setting out for Rome. It was affecting to see the Countess's tenderness and motherly care for Angelica. Angelica seemed to have that within her which prevented her giving her whole attachment to a human being, but still she looked happy.

We unanimously wished them a happy journey.* The President, however, shook his head when they were gone, and said something about "throwing money away on the high road."

* I beg my readers courteously to do the same, and not, this year at least, to expect to hear anything of the travellers.

CHAPTER V.

THE SWAN.

The swan the reedy lake along
Floats, rich in beauty and in song.

BÖTTIGER.

I SAW one day in spring a swan taking his morning bath. With easy, free, and graceful movements he threw the waves about, which, fresh and clear, glancing and foaming, danced around him, made the white down yet more dazzling, circled caressingly on his soft contour, and reflected in each drop their beautiful ruler, who now struck them with his wings and now lovingly sunk his head in their bosom. Sometimes he sunk altogether, and let the waves embrace above his head; then he appeared again, shook the silver bubbles from his plumage, and swam proudly and commandingly forward, while the water divided itself obediently, and in its clear depths reflected his proud and lordly figure.

I observed this lovely image on a spring morning, by the song of the birds, by the murmur of the young leaves, which were opening to the wind. I saw it with sincere delight, yet by degrees it caused in me a deep melancholy. "This creature," thought I, "moves like a lord in his element; it closes around him only to heighten the enjoyment of his life, and reflect his beauty. What harmony, what freshness, what beauty in the relation between this being and its world! This creature—and man! Man in continual strife with his world, trammelled in all his movements, oppressed by the very air which he breathes;—man, the lord of the creation—and its slave!

I thought and I suffered—I felt myself bound, and I knew myself a slave. Ah! I understood not then the law of reconciliation; I understood not then that man should regain the dominion over nature which he had lost in his fall; that he once again, like the swan, should move himself in his life's element in freedom and beauty.

But notwithstanding this, there are yet in this life beings who seem freed in a wonderful degree from the bondage of the law of nature, happy and fortunate beings, whom friendly powers seem to have protected from their birth. Adelaide was one of these! When I contemplated her life and her

movements, when I watched her actions and her motions, I thought involuntarily of the swan. The same lightness, the same natural grace, the same instinctive, ever happy movements; the same careless, quiet self-possession, either in repose or action. She did everything easily and well; everything that she undertook succeeded, and everything was graceful, appropriate, and filled with the freshness of youth. She played and sang, as it were, her way through life. This led me to think further, what then is grace other than that facility with which a being moves in its own world, and rules the phenomena of that world, or adapts itself to them not by a speculative, but by a natural, unsought, and unacquired power. Grace is, like beauty and genius, a god-parent-gift of heaven, and enchants like these, because through them heaven reveals itself. Adelaide had received this gift; and no person, whether he were high or low, educated or uneducated, could live any time near her without feeling its influence. Even over animals she exercised a caressing, commanding, and extraordinary power.

Thus beautiful, thus pleasing, thus inexperienced in life and suffering; certain always to succeed and give pleasure; loved, caressed, and flattered; gifted too with a lively temperament, would it not have been a miracle had Adelaide not been somewhat presumptuous? And so she was; but there was even a charm in that. Angelica one day drew Adelaide playing with a lion, who tamely allowed himself to be bound by a garland of flowers which she held in her hand, he the while regarding her with a peculiar *lion-tenderness*. This was a happy picture of Adelaide's power, and of its operation on those whom she governed. Her presumption was full of joke and sport; it was the presumption of a being who knows his own power, but who never wishes to make bad use of it, and who never cares to use it in earnest. Her presumption was softened by her sincere good-heartedness; her unpretending simplicity; her self-forgetfulness; and her unceasing desire to make all satisfied, and to see every one joyous and happy. Her amiability, it is true, often approached to weakness; her joyous thoughtlessness, to levity; yet nevertheless she was no stranger to the most elevated feeling, the most noble seriousness, and to thoughts as high as pure. But these moments of a deeper life were

rare and fleeting; she was too much the spoiled child of nature.

Adelaide was desirous of pleasing; she was desirous of pleasing all; but first and foremost those whom she loved; and in that I saw no harm. It was the natural expression of an affectionate nature, a real woman's soul.

There is commonly no distinction made between the desire of pleasing and coquetry, yet nevertheless there is a very essential difference. How generally repulsive, how displeasing is the woman who is devoid of the wish to please; to the enlightened thinker, perhaps, quite as disgusting as the coquette. The life of an affectionate being is to unite by a beneficent and agreeable impression all beings among themselves and with her,—the true Christian woman will endeavour to be pleasing to all, and especially to those who are nearest to her. But then in all this she thinks not of herself, but of affording pleasure and satisfaction to others, and thus fulfilling the Creator's intention in her existence. She turns herself into a flower, but only in that degree which is right and proper in itself and pleasing to God and man. She follows, by thus doing, the line of beauty which nature and a good education have drawn in her soul.

The coquettish woman, on the contrary, refers all to herself; the exterior of her character is selfishness and assurance. She will please, let it cost what it may; and overstepping the line of beauty in defiance of what is good and befitting, and sinking down into the sensual, empty attraction, loses by degrees her power, her charm, the esteem of the good, and the peace of her own breast—and the holy heaven of beauty closes its gates against her.

The noble desire of pleasing may degenerate into coquetry—coquetry is its caricature; but do we not see everywhere in life, that the white may become grey, the grey become darker and darker, till the colour of innocence is altogether lost in black? The white, however, exists, and may lie spotless beside the black, even as truth may beam clear by the side of falsehood. There exists an innocent and amiable desire of pleasing; may every woman possess it, and cry shame upon its caricature!

Would Adelaide do this? Of this I was not certain. I feared that her fair character would degenerate in fashionable

life, amid the flatteries and the pleasures to which she was exposed, and in which she appeared to find too much delight. I desired for her another place of residence than the capital, and above all things a different kind of husband to Otto. Count Alarik was always in my thoughts.

What, however, is certain was, that with all her virtues and her faults, Adelaide was extremely loveable, and ere long she so completely won my heart that I loved her as if she had been my own child. She made my life happy through hers; it did my heart good when Adelaide came in, when I looked on her beauty and listened to her sweet voice, when the expression of her own innermost life tuned, so to say, the whole world to music; but then she was so good—so sincerely good! Beings like this operate upon us like the sun and spring: is it a wonder that we love them? If she loved me I know not, and I did not seek to inquire. I have seen so much uneasiness, so much pain, nay, even so much bitterness and injustice in those who cherish the feeling, “am I to get nothing in return for what I give?” And what wouldest thou have?—love? Thou fool; does not love give itself capriciously, not for service, not for gold, not for love and fidelity does it give itself,—why, I leave for cleverer heads than mine to determine. But it will always be the counsel given both by wisdom and goodness in this world where we wander in darkness, and so often blindly bestow our love; it will always be the best, I say, to give without demanding anything in return. Thus I did in Adelaide’s case. She, on the contrary, always accustomed to be loved and spoiled, received my tenderness and care as something quite natural, quite in the regular order of things; but it was pleasant to me that she did so.

I once mentioned to the President the resemblance which I found between Adelaide and the swan. It pleased him, and she was soon called both by him and by the whole family “The Swan.” Her dazzling fairness, her soft and beautiful figure, made this appellation particularly appropriate.

How amiable and gentle her nature was I had every day an opportunity of seeing in her behaviour to Edla. This unhappy young creature seemed to have a bitter root in her heart, which shed gall over every object that surrounded her. She was for the most part silent and reserved; but what she did say was caustic, and what she did was displeasing and

unfriendly. Adelaide could not approach her with her beneficent warmth and affection, because Edla repelled all friendly advances; but Adelaide never replied to her sister's bitterness; she bore her ill-humour quietly, and if she knew anything that was agreeable to her she did it. Nevertheless she seemed almost to fear her, and rather to avoid any interference with her. This connexion between the sisters would have been quite inexplicable to me had they grown up together; but at the age of eight Edla had been sent from her father's house and placed in a school whence she had only been recalled a year before the death of her mother, about two years before my entrance into the family.

I contemplated Edla narrowly, and discovered in her a deep and wounded sensibility. What she said often betrayed a conviction of injustice in the distribution of the human lot, and great bitterness of mind in consequence. She seemed to feel deeply the human inability to avoid suffering and unfortunate fate; she considered this fate to be hers, and yet would not submit to it. She seized upon the discordances of life with a keen glance, and pondering on the niggardliness of nature towards herself, her eye had become sick, and her heart wounded. These wounds she regarded as incurable, and she became reserved to the whole world; her lips never complained, and no one ever saw her eye shed a tear. It might be said that her whole life and temperament was a silent, bitter, and proud repining. She was irritable and sensitive, but shyness and pride prevented her exhibiting her wounded feeling, except by a contemptuous and bitter demeanour. Beneath all this, however, there existed real power, deep feeling, love of truth, and extraordinary, though very much neglected, powers of mind. I felt a deep interest in her, and waiting till time and circumstances should show me how best a ray of light might be thrown into that darkened soul, I determined to follow her quietly, and endeavour to win her confidence by love. I was convinced that unreasonable severity and improper management had laid the foundation of her unfortunate temper.

Between Edla and her father there existed that coldness and distance which often arise between parents and children when they make mutual exactions, and when no reconciling love steps as intercessor between.

“I gave thee life,” says the father to the child; “I paid attention to thy childhood; thou eatest of my bread; thou art sheltered by my roof. I give thee freedom, and such pleasures as are suitable to thy years. Be grateful; obey my will; anticipate my wishes; live in order to make me happy.”

“Make *me* happy,” replies the child; “give to me that blessedness which my soul requires, and without which I cannot gladden thy life. I demanded not life from thee; but the life which thou hast given demands happiness. If thou wilt not give it, I despise thy first gift—it is to me a burden!”

And thus stand these unfortunates, exacting and complaining one of the other, and becoming bitterer and bitterer every day. O, grant them, God, that an enlightening word, that a tone of love, may come and change the false position—one of the bitterest and saddest on the earth—and bringing heart to heart, annul all former strife, and show by mutual compliance the path to mutual joy!

Meanwhile I wondered how such a position could have arisen between Edla and a father on the whole as gentle and amiable in character as the President. But he seemed to me to have made it a rule to be always severe to Edla, and I much feared that the late Presidentska's principles had sown the first pernicious seed.

The President, in consequence, desired that his daughters should be governed as they were when they were children, and that they should have certain and fixed employments for every hour of the day. These employments were by no means adapted to the tastes and dispositions of the girls, but were to be followed in a slavish order, according to the system laid down for the day. At a certain time the young ladies were to play, at a certain time to draw, at another certain time to dance, to sew, to read, etc.

Adelaide, who had talent for almost everything, did all with ease and pleasure; and when she, as was often the case, gave herself a holiday, she could always bring forward a good reason, or else she laughed and caressed away all her father's displeasure. Not so Edla. She had no taste for any accomplishment; and as her progress was far behind Adelaide's, and as she could not, like Adelaide, play away a reproof, it

became a duty for her to go regularly through these fruitless hours of study. She obeyed sullenly and without remark; worked without taste, worked ill, and received reproaches for it, which she took in silent bitterness. Adelaide was the favourite of her father, and of the whole house. No one loved Edla; she felt this, and became ever more and more self-introverted. Neither did it seem to me good for Edla to accompany her beautiful sister into society, in which she stood beside her like a shade and a cipher; but as I did not yet know what there was better for Edla to do at home, I did not seek to counteract the President in this particular. Edla, too, seemed to desire to go from home; but this rather from unrest and inward dissatisfaction than from any hope of enjoyment. I remarked with pleasure that she endured me to be near her, and did not repulse the friendliness I showed towards her. I hoped herefrom much good for the future, since, if my heart was with Adelaide—and I could not help its being so—my thoughts, to make up for it, laboured incessantly for Edla.

And now a few words about the little ones. They were beautiful; they were sweet; they were clever, even to mischief; slow in learning; very much given to experiments, especially in physics; they were incessantly trying how far certain objects were combustible, and others not so; how far that which, when it was struck against stone, broke in pieces, would yet hold together when struck against wood; from how great a height a glass might be permitted to fall against the floor without its being broken, and so on—all which experiments made great havoc in the house, without making the little ones much more prudent; for, because of their beauty and their liveliness, they were spoiled by every one, and the President did not like that a serious word should be said to them. Their dearest enjoyment was to play with Adelaide, and nothing was more bewitching than to see these three together.

One, two, three, four women are here already described. Let us be gay, and make a great round among all the world's ladies who figure in the masquerade of life.

WE WOMEN.

I had an old aunt who used often to say "we women," and thereupon held all manner of discourses on "us women," classifying and arranging us. I remember that at that time it was not particularly edifying to me, but this evening the expression "we women" came suddenly on my tongue; perhaps because my old aunt yet lives a little in me.

Until this our day, education, particularly in Sweden, has developed few individualities in women; and daughters not unfrequently leave the household oven like rolls of the same baking. The life and fate of women are in general too much controlled by exterior law, for it to be permitted them to shape themselves into forms of their own creation, and therefore it is much easier to divide women into classes than men.

Some amongst us there are to whom life has been a rough soil; they go through it without being loved, and, what is worse, without being able sincerely to love any one. The frostiness of the air around them chills the warmth in their breasts; they become bitter and hard; and as they can produce no flowers, they turn themselves into rods. They cannot leave virtue and beauty at peace, and they quarrel with beauty and weakness. Let us hope that by the light of a more friendly sun the tree of their life shall put forth new buds, and that they shall receive and give forth gladness.

Others there are, and they are many, whom nature has liberally provided for; they are good and amiable; they love virtue; but the world and temptation, unwise counsellors, and their own hearts' weakness, make them fall. The best heart becomes soiled by unworthy desires and low pleasures. Fallen angels! many are there among them who weep bitter tears over the grave of their own innocence, and these may one day arise in renewed virtue. Others there are who overlay its loss with flowers and mirth; over these weep the angels of heaven.

Many others are there also whom nature and fortune made for temptation, but friendly stars have kept watch over them. Their hearts were early attached by a pure love, and a protecting home closed around them like a Midsummer bower. Their joys and their sorrows are alike innocent, and all their

intercourse with their fellow-creatures is peaceful. No one hates them, and, what is more tranquillizing, no one loves them more or differently to what the Gospel permits. They live loved and honoured, and general opinion calls them patterns and examples. But these quietly happy ones, these untried ones, how often do they pass heavy judgments on those who, in an atmosphere different to their own, have frozen their hearts or scorched their wings. They fancy that they have a right to despise them; and yet it is possible, after all, that they are in no way superior to them, except in being happier.

Others also are there, thank God!—and my heart warms in thinking that I know and love such—who, neither step-children nor favourites of nature and fortune, tempted or not tempted by life, resemble each other nevertheless in this, that they never let anything dim the celestial mirror in their souls. Pure themselves, and hating all evil, yet they pity and pardon those who sin. A heaven of pure compassion lies in their glance, and through it only does the guilty one read his judgment. Good, true, wise, patient, affectionate, they do not permit themselves to be disturbed by human weakness or severity: they go tranquilly on their way; they have a light within them that guides them, and that warmly, beneficently beams around them. They understand how to compassionate those sorrows they have themselves never felt; and when they suffer, they can yet smile joyfully on others. Like the bird of paradise, they hover onwards over the earth without disfiguring their wings with its dust, and by their loveliness they entice others to follow on their heavenward flight.

And now back again to——well! but I had nearly forgotten the fifth and most populous class of women, and thus, with them, nearly shut myself out of the creation. I do not know how better to designate them than as “the harmless.” We, its members, are as numerous as the potato, and come, like it, all over the world. We are the world’s household fare, and the world would go on badly without us. We fill the room, and yet deprive nobody of a place; we neutralize the warring elements of life, which without us would destroy one another. We are produced by the *juste milieu*, and this our element we seek to diffuse over the world. We call

exultation folly, and Sappho a mad-woman. We go to church and to the opera, and don't wish to be much noticed. We take from life exactly what life will give us, and are contented; we put our houses in order, salt our meat according to established rule; speak moderately good or ill of our neighbour, think only as much as is necessary, and beat down the price of everything that is much praised or greatly in demand—in one word we are what are called "equal people;" and keep the world in equipoise. We sing best this good song,

Trallala, trallala, tralla, trall;
Trallala, trallala, trallom!

—To the worthy sisterhood in all humility this is dedicated. And now again, *volti subito* to the President.

CHAPTER VI.

HOURS AT HOME.

Many happy moments—many sad
Hast thou conducted through my narrow door;
And still life's blossoms ope and fade,
Just as they did before.

TEGNER, "*New-Year's Eve.*"

WE sate at the dinner-table. The third dish, fricandeau with parsnips, was just despatched, and we had begun with the fourth—a substantial cheesecake—when the President made a little pause, drank a glass of wine, put aside his knife and fork, and leaning backwards in his chair, said, feelingly:

"How little man really requires to live; how little he requires to be content! It is wonderful!" and he became quite affected; "with one dish," continued he, "one such cheesecake as this to my dinner every day, I could be perfectly satisfied." I coughed a little. "Yes, I assure you!" continued he more energetically, as he looked at me with an air of a little defiance—"I assure you it would be quite enough for me!"

I thought it a pity to take him out of an illusion which made him happy, and in which after the cheesecake he yet unconsciously swallowed three or four little tartlets.

The President became yet more pleased with his pleasure over his afternoon's coffee and his glass of liqueur. The little

ones stood, one on each side, at his knee, and received now and then a spoonful of the Arabian drink.

"I do not ask much of life, Mamselle Rönquist," said he; "to have everything comfortable for me and mine is my utmost desire; to be able to give my daughters a good education is my chief ambition—it will be the best inheritance I can give them. If people were less exacting of our Lord, and of each other, they would be happier!—What dost thou want my little chick? more coffee? See then, my angel, a whole teaspoonful more!—We should thank God for what we have, Mamselle Rönquist, and seek our means of enjoyment more in the internal than in the external, and everything would go on better. Is it not so, *bonne amie*?"

I could not help acknowledging that all this was exceedingly true.

"We are advancing now," continued the President, "to a time of the year which really requires that people should bring something from their inward life to warm the outward. I hope that we all shall do our best, and I am then certain that we shall not congeal. With good children, and good friends, one's home becomes always warm."

I could not help casting a glance at the silent and clouded Edla.

"I hope in particular," said the President, "that our winter evenings will be very pleasant. The evening is the flower of the day in this dark weather, and—" continued he gaily, "we shall not spare candles. My Adelaide will give us many a beautiful song; my little ones shall dance, we shall all do our part to—my good *bonne amie* Rönquist, I hope that we shall be very happy together!"

OUR EVENINGS.

These really were very agreeable. We passed them chiefly in a large drawing-room, furnished with the taste and the simple elegance which distinguished all the President's arrangements. Visits were received two days in the week. Countess Augusta was with us, and before long Count Alarik W. became our every-day guest. Count Alarik soon obtained a great influence over us all. I do not know how it happened, but life had a higher interest when he was present. One felt that in his mind rich treasures lay concealed, and whatever we said or

did, we always had an eye to him ; what will he say ? what will he think ? how will he like this ? He did not occasion fear in us, but certainly a sort of respect. We were not perfectly easy in company with him, but certainly it was a sort of *gêne* we would not willingly be without. Adelaide seemed the least under his influence of any of us. Her full, fresh, young life moved as before in self-possessed, unclouded security, and no one could remark in anything she did a desire to attract attention—nothing certainly but a wish to arrange all comfortably for every one, and to contrive that everybody had exactly that which he would have wished for most. Count Alarik, on the contrary, as I plainly saw, had his eye upon her. He conversed principally with the President and the Countess Augusta, but his conversation was for Adelaide, and it provoked me that, on the whole, she so little understood how to attend to him. The tea ; the children ; the piano ; a thousand little matters carried her here and there, and one would have thought, to see her, that she already knew all that she required in life. On the contrary, perhaps she enjoyed unconsciously to exercise a sort of power over “that proud man,” as she called him ; and when the severe expression of his countenance irresistibly gave way to one of gentleness and mildness as he spoke to her ; when the seriousness of his features was suddenly changed into a beaming smile—the most beautiful I ever saw on manly lips—then Adelaide carried her young head higher, and her face shone with delight and life-enjoyment.

Edla was the only shade in these bright evenings, but even she brightened momentarily. The attention which the Count paid to her gave me great pleasure. His piercing glance was often fixed upon her ; he understood how to turn the conversation so that she must take part in it, and drew her out by questions addressed to herself. I was surprised at the powerful thoughts which lay in her soul, at the same time that I was pained by the bitterness and misanthropy they often expressed. So young and so embittered ; it was indeed melancholy !

Our least agreeable evenings were those when young Baron Otto visited us, for then Count Alarik lost his good humour, and we were not indemnified for his silence by Otto's conversation, which consisted chiefly of a continual praising of

his fair cousin. Count Alarik sometimes jested him rather sharply on the uniformity of his love-songs; but young Otto contented himself with looking cross at him, and continued to make an idol of Adelaide, who was always, at the same time, both friendly and unfriendly to him. If he talked long, she told him to leave off, or else to change his subject; if he were silent and out of humour, she went to him and joked and played with him till she made him gay again. My good reader, I assure thee, on my honour as a governess, that it was not coquetting; only the desire of a good and affectionate heart to see every one content.

It was also vexatious when the Baroness, Otto's mother, who passed her life in a continual whirl of dissipation, came and carried away Adelaide to some party; for then the best pleasure of our evening was away, and Count Alarik by one means or another got away too. The Baroness was polite and agreeable in her manners, though in her conversation, like the Baron her son, she was somewhat uniform, although in another way; she repeated continually certain bold ideas which have been in everybody's mouth since the beginning of the world, and showed with all earnestness and zeal, that black was black, and water was water. But she was really thoroughly good-hearted, and had an affection for Adelaide which soon disposed me kindly towards her.

A person whom I never could rightly understand nor fathom was the Countess Augusta. She had a finished worldly education, real acquirements, and a style of behaviour with which no fault could be found. She embellished a room by her handsome and well-dressed person; she could make a conversation interesting; but I felt, I do not well know how, always a repugnance to her. I had no confidence in her. It seemed to me sometimes as if she were both cold-hearted and false. Sometimes, again, I thought I must be very wrong; and the esteem which Count Alarik seemed to have for her made me doubt the justice of my aversion. A suspicion that she was secretly envious of Adelaide's superior beauty and charms never left me; but then she had so much self-command, was so purposely reserved regarding her feelings, that I could never become certain in this particular. She showed much friendship for Adelaide, who loved her sincerely; still there existed no confidence between the sisters. The

Countess Augusta was ten years older than Adelaide, and had married the rich Count U. when Adelaide was but a child. Neither did her manners inspire confidence. She was more insinuating with Count Alarik than with any one else, yet she was polite to all. I could not, however, free myself from my prepossession against her, and in return she liked me very little.

I must say a word of the President;—to present the company, and not the host, would be unmannerly and unjust, particularly when, as here, the host is an important part of the company. The President's *bon ton*, polished manners, and real humanity, made him wonderfully agreeable in private life. The evenings were the favourite portions of his days, and he seldom permitted anything during them to put him out of humour. His conversation was agreeable, and bore testimony to his being a man of the world, and, what is better, his being a man of solid acquirements, and, what is best of all, his being a good and an honest man.

THE BIRTHDAY.

The President had reached his fifty-fifth year. His daughters went in the morning in procession to wish him joy, whilst I, with a pair of embroidered slippers in my hand, brought up the rear. The President's eyes were red when we came in, and the green silk curtain which hung before his wife's portrait was drawn somewhat aside; he seemed to have sate and contemplated it. The young ladies came forward each with some little gift. Edla had made a purse, Adelaide had worked a *sac-de-nuit*. Little Mina had written her first epistle, in which stood in huge letters that she wished her father a long life. Nina presented a drawing of her own composition, and of which I cannot resist giving a hasty description. It represented a house of a very peculiar style, and which I would not counsel any one to imitate. A lady a little higher than the house, the chimney of which finished where her head began, stood and gathered fruit from an extraordinary tree. In the top of the tree sits a bird (for the original picture still exists), which, certainly not without reason, considers the lady's head as a suitable morsel for his beak. The branch of the tree flies in the air over the house, the bird, and the lady. The President was much amused with

this original composition. Certain bold lines in the drawing gave us great hope of an in-dwelling genius in the little five-years-old artist.

"Who knows, who knows," said the President, "how far this may go? one begins with blunder-work, and ends with master-work. Who knows?"

I agreed with the President that no one really could know.

In the evening, independent of our usual every-day guests, his Excellency G., his lady, and young Otto, arrived. They also had presents for the President, and these both rich and costly. Otto availed himself of the opportunity to make presents to his cousins, evidently with the intention of inducing Adelaide to accept a beautiful Sevigné of precious stones, which the President procured him permission to fasten on her forehead, by means of a gold band which she wore round her head.

"Charming! charming!" cried they all, except Count Alarik, who looked on her with a darkened glance.

"Is it not beautiful? is it not charming?" demanded the enchanted Baroness from him. Count Alarik was silent. "Does it not become her? Does she not seem made to wear jewels? Is she not inexpressibly beautiful in them?" she continued to ask.

"I do not think so," answered Count Alarik drily. And he was wrong; for Adelaide, where she stood in the full light of the chandelier, and with the beaming ornament on her snow-white forehead, was really dazzling to look at.

"Jewels become Adelaide really delightfully," said Countess Augusta; "and it is no wonder that she is so fond of them."

Count Alarik's countenance darkened more and more.

"You are heavenly! you are enchanting!" said Otto, with clasped hands.

Adelaide had cast a glance at Count Alarik, and left the room unobserved; when she returned, however, the ornament was gone. There was a general exclamation; Otto was indignant, and insisted that she should resume it.

"It oppresses me, good Otto," said Adelaide; "it tickles my forehead."

"It oppresses you? Ah, you heavenly one! I wish——"

Heaven knows what he was about to say, but his mother interrupted him hastily, and said to Adelaide, "Listen, little

angel! I have promised to go and show myself, only for one minute, at supper at the Counsellor of State's; do oblige me by accompanying me there. You are very well dressed as you are; only put on Otto's little present, and they will be all enchanted with you. I would so willingly show my sweet Adelaide. I will only stay a quarter of an hour—only ten minutes—and then we will return, and finish the evening here. Dear brother-in-law—best Wilhelm! you give your consent, don't you?"

"With pleasure," said the President, who played chess with his Excellency.

I became uneasy—I thought the thing began to look quite hazardous.

"Adelaide, my beautiful angel! you hear. Come, my sweetest child!" said the Baroness.

"Ah! she—the angel! the sweet, the heavenly creature!—she will come!" said the happy Otto.

Adelaide stood by Count W. It is hard to understand what movement in his soul caused him to take her hand. Adelaide cast down her eyes, a burning blush passed over her cheeks, and she said with some confusion, "No; I come not! I cannot go with you!"

"You cannot come! Why cannot you come?" asked Otto angrily.

"Because I will not," said Adelaide, looking petulantly at him; "shall I not be permitted to do what I will?"

Otto looked a little startled, but was silent.

"I thought, Adelaide," said the Baroness, somewhat offended, "that you would have wished to give me pleasure in such a trifle."

"My sweet, good aunt," exclaimed Adelaide, as she embraced and kissed her, "do not be angry! Another time—whenever you please—I will accompany you; this evening I have no fancy for going out."

And now she overwhelmed the Baroness with good words; was so sincere, so engaging, so amusing, that the Baroness, and even Otto, forgot both anger and supper: for, by all the best luck in the word, they had not remarked the cause that kept her back.

Count Alarik remained in the most brilliant humour, and we had a gay and lively evening.

VISITS.

One went out of our house and another came in, in an unintermitting stream on the Sunday evenings. The lobby was crowded with servants; in the drawing-room the salutations and conversation were unceasing; my hand wearied in lifting the tea-pot, and for all the warmth and all the sugar I expended, I received no thanks; no, not so much as a smile. In the mean time, through love to my fellow-creatures, I submitted to

—— my lot,
To sit doing good, and be forgot;

strengthened therein by my interest in some of the visitors. It is not in all things the service which is difficult; it depends rather upon whom one serves. Mrs. N., who passed whole nights, even to four and five o'clock in the morning, in making tea for Dr. Johnson, had a noble post, and a useful occupation in life. Is it not so, my gentle readers? for ye well know—it is beautiful, it is glorious to serve what one loves, what one admires; be it by head or hand—it may be by giving one's heart's blood, or quite simply in making tea—it is all the same—it only depends on time and opportunity. O yes! certainly it is very pleasant!

But to return to the visitors. Among them were Mrs. L. and her daughters. They were not rich, they were not young, they were not beautiful; they had none of the outward advantages which commonly make people remarked and sought in society, and, nevertheless, they spread an inexpressible charm in the company where they were. There was calm in their countenances, there was goodness, thought and life in their words; one felt that they were at peace with themselves and with life, and the pure atmosphere which they seemed to breathe diffused itself unconsciously to others. One felt well, one did not exactly know how; one was excited to think, and the most insignificant subjects of conversation were easily and unostentatiously turned to a higher interest. The gay and comic in Vivika's temper and manners contrasted agreeably with the mild wisdom of her mother, and with the bright and more poetic character of her sister. They said no sweet things to each other, but it was easy to see, that they must be happy with and through each

other. And is it not precisely the variety of dispositions and capacities which, when souls are united by love, constitutes happiness in family life?

When these amiable women were gone, Count Alarik said:

“The impression made by personal beauty is generally acknowledged; I am the last who would wish to deny the beneficent influence of beauty on the mind, its bewitching power on the heart. But what works equally with this, and deeper and more beneficially, are the qualities we have just had an opportunity of admiring in Mrs. L. and her daughters. That fine proportion in the development of the powers of the soul, that clear understanding, that precision and order in the expression and delivery of opinions which instantly make them comprehensible and clear, these make on me an impression equal to that of beauty; this colouring of the soul, it is true, reveals itself slower, but at the same time it is not so perishable as that of the body.”

And so saying he looked at Adelaide, whose beautiful under-lip pouted pettishly.

“To be very beautiful is a temptation,” continued Count Alarik. “One is so easily led in youth to think that in one’s appearance one possesses a treasure, rich enough to give happiness to a whole life. The world moves so joyfully, so pleasantly for the young beauty, so that it is difficult for her to seize the seriousness of life.”

“And why this seriousness, why must it be so important to seize it?” asked Adelaide.

“Because a human being is called to something more than being merely a flower or a butterfly; as such, it is possible to please, to charm, to call forth approbation; but never esteem, nor true love.”

Adelaide looked oppressed, and tears rose to her eyes. “Life is so pleasant!” said she. “God has given us joy and life; why shall we not enjoy his gifts? Ah, let us, let us be joyful.”

“Life has higher and weightier interests,” said Count Alarik with deeper earnestness, “and which but ill agree with a thoughtless enjoyment of its passing pleasures.”

“There are,” said Countess Augusta, “weighty and important duties to be performed; man must not live for himself alone——”

“What do you mean, then,” asked Adelaide earnestly, half anxious, half laughing, “with your importance and your duties? Is it something out of the Roman history that one must resemble, to be a human being? Must one follow a course of physics, or write treatises on political economy?”

Count Alarik contemplated her with somewhat of displeasure, and Countess Augusta continued:

“The human creature shall, as I have just said, not live for self alone; he belongs to society, to fatherland——”

“And heaven!” interrupted Adelaide: “I know that,—well, what more?”

“For these he shall live,” continued Countess Augusta.

“Well, that is quite natural, if he live and is good,” answered Adelaide.

“More or less, however,” said Count Alarik, smiling gently; “and for that he shall, if it is requisite, be able to die.”

“Die? die for what is great and beautiful, die for what one loves?—but that is the very thing that would be delightful!” exclaimed Adelaide with beaming and tearful eyes. “I will not trouble myself about that.”

Count Alarik looked at her with an extraordinary emotion. She stretched her hand to him with the most engaging charm, and said:

“Let me be glad in life and in death! God is good; he intends good to us all in joy as in sorrow; why should we not be glad? Let me not see this gloomy seriousness!”

Count Alarik did not answer; he pressed the snow-white hand to his lips, followed Adelaide with his eyes during the whole evening, but remained silent and thoughtful. Adelaide was grave for a moment, but soon returned to her usual liveliness, and laughed, sung, and played with the little ones.

CHAPTER VII.

UNLUCKY DAYS.

My dearest reader, art thou not acquainted with days which may be called unlucky days? In the history of the world we see unlucky periods, when during ages everything seems to go wrong; they murder, they burn, they overturn thrones and religions; and as in everything and everywhere, the

great reflects itself in the little, and the little in the great, so man may even count in his life unlucky days *par excellence*.

Thou beginnest in the morning, for instance, by putting thy shirt on wrong side out, and this gives a kind of direction to the events of the day. Thou cuttest thyself when thou art shaving, thou goest out to seek people whom thou dost not find, and thou art found by people whom thou dost not seek, and whom thou couldst wish at Jericho; thou sayest what is dull when thou wishest to be witty; thy dinner is bad, everything goes inconceivably wrong; and if thou takest it into thy head to make an offer to a lady on such a day, thou mayst be certain of getting a refusal, for thou art on the wrong side of thy luck.

What the President had turned wrong side out in his toilet, on a certain Thursday, in a certain week, in a certain month, I will not take upon me to guess; but certain it was that an ungentle fate followed him all through the day, and every member of the family was made more or less conscious of it. Early in the morning all was at cross purposes with the President's luck and temper. He was to go to the palace at three o'clock, and three black patches decorated his chin and under-lip, and the friseur who was to cut and arrange his hair did not come. At this the President fumed so fiercely and so fierily, and was besides in such terrible uneasiness, that I in anguish and full of good intention offered myself to do the friseur's service.

The President said, "Impossible!" and objected through politeness, but asked me, notwithstanding, jokingly, if I had ever cut a man's hair before; and when I could instance my uncle the Notary of the Supreme Court of Justice, my brother the Secretary, and my brother-in-law the Burgomaster, as all three having been clipped by me for some important occasion, he joyfully accepted my offer. We went into the President's study. He seated himself to look through a bundle of papers; I spread a towel over his shoulders, and began to operate with the scissors in his bushy hair. The difficulty of the matter was, that the President never for a moment held his head still. He was earnestly occupied with his papers, and as it would appear, with something disagreeable in them; for he swore every now and then half aloud, and shook his head at the same time, so that my scissors were obliged to make

many a hasty and adventurous evolution. I have a real talent, as every one has told me, in cutting and dressing hair; but, gracious heavens! it cannot be expected that one shall be able to dress a head which is incessantly wagging as well as one that holds itself quiet. But it was ten times worse when I got the curling-irons, to twist some locks which very agreeably decorated the President's temples, for now, as the movement of the tongs could not be so rapid as those of the scissors, and the President continued to shake his head, he was either burnt or lugged.

"Aj, the devil! My best Mamselle, do not make away with my head!" put me in great embarrassment. It was by far the worst, however, when the haircutting being finished, the President got up to look at himself in the glass. He remained standing, so amazed and confounded, that I felt a cold perspiration come over me.

"Father in heaven!" said the President in an awful voice, "how I look! Is this cut? Am I not shaved—absolutely shaved? I cannot show myself to people!"

I assured him, in the anguish of my soul, that it became him so well, that he had never looked better;—but when Adelaide came in, and began to laugh heartily at her father's extraordinary appearance as well as at mine, while she embraced him—I also was smitten by her gaiety, and laughed even to tears, seeking in vain all the time to utter my excuses for both the haircutting and the laughter. The President was on the high way to keep us company; but changing hastily, he became furious, and combing his hair with all his ten fingers, so that it stuck out in all directions, he sprang down stairs, into his carriage, and drove to court.

At dinner-time the President returned; he was in a gentler humour, but somewhat ungracious towards me; and I must render him the justice to say, it was not to be wondered at. —"God grant we may find enough to satisfy us!" said the President, as with a troubled air he glanced over the dinner-table, on which, this day, stood one dish less than usual, that is to say, four dishes;* but these, according to my ideas, were sufficient to satisfy twice our number. I, however, soon found out that the President's sighs were prophetic,

* In Sweden the dinner is put on the table all at the same time, not brought in in courses.—M. H.

for the dishes were ill dressed ; the roast beef was so raw that it could not be eaten ; the cream cake so greasy that the President declared it was "poisonous." It was Edla's month to take care of the house, and her carelessness and indifference became almost every day more perceptible. The President cast a displeased glance on her, but was too considerate and polite to make any scene, or find fault with his daughter at table. He contented himself with laconically remarking the faults of the dishes, and not eating them, but became in the mean time internally more and more empty and dissatisfied. Towards the end of the dinner he desired, for the edification of the little ones, and perhaps also to show his stoicism, to exhibit a wonderful trick with a glass full of wine, which was to be turned upside down without a single drop falling out. No—not one drop, but all the wine which the glass contained dashed out on the fair damask tablecloth—whereupon great alarm, confusion, and consternation arose, through which, however, arrived a more favourable moment for me, by my assuring the President that by the means of brandy the wine spots could be taken out of the cloth, and engaging that in future no traces of them should remain. But all these tricks, however, did not prepare us a more joyous afternoon.

Edla had seated herself in a window, reading a volume of *Metastasio*. The President went to her, and found fault with her pretty severely for the spoiled dinner. Edla was silent as usual, but assumed an air of such offensive indifference, that the President found himself compelled to make his reproaches severer. "It would be better," he said sharply, "to attend to the housekeeping than to teach oneself Italian."

I could not exactly see why the former could not be united with the latter. I said something about this a little afterwards, and that a high and refined education might be perfectly consistent with a domestic mind and existence. I ventured a little attack on certain prejudices ; but the President, who, when he once got cross, was a little impracticable, and whose head was quite wrong since the morning, only replied, "I do not like that people shall speak in that way."

I perceived that I had chosen my moment ill, and that it was time to let the matter rest.

The evening came, and with it Count Alarik and Countess

Augusta, and with them some gaiety in our circle; for even Adelaide had this day been grave and absent. Countess Augusta was uncommonly agreeable, and Count Alarik was gay and happy: he took the children on his knee, played with them, looked at Adelaide, who sewed industriously, as if it had been for the dear daily bread. The President asked Edla to play a sonata of Beethoven. She excused herself on the plea of "pain in her fingers," which was true, though the President obviously doubted it. He now asked Adelaide to sing something, and she went to the piano immediately. Count Alarik fell into deep, but, as it would appear, pleasant dreamings, and answered only with a hm! hm! to Countess Augusta's remarks on music and composers. He seemed now to be wholly occupied with the singer.

In the mean time the giddy little ones were racketing over the table so desperately, that in the midst of it a glass of warm lemonade dashed over the President's coat, a tea-cup flew under my nose, and the cream-jug emptied itself into the sugar-basin. All this was done in a moment, and the President, greatly enraged, even with his own high hands put the little ones in penitence in the next room. This little scene, however, disturbed but slightly the rest of the company. With enchanting life and expression Adelaide sung a song on "Home."

"A home!" said Count Alarik softly, as he crossed his arms on his breast and bowed his head; "a home, with a beloved wife—it is in truth a heaven!"

"Yes," said the President, "and with an amiable daughter, who in everything seeks to please her father, and provides so tenderly for his comfort and enjoyment."

The tone in which this was said, and the sharp glance he cast upon Edla, caused all eyes to turn upon her. She coloured violently. I am certain that the President immediately repented his hasty and unfriendly words; but what was said, was said, and Edla's embittered feelings rose hastily to a degree which I should have thought with her to be impossible. She turned to Count Alarik and said:

"You have compared home to a heaven, do you know what else it may resemble?"

He looked questioningly upon her, and she continued:—
"A house of correction."

I shuddered at these bitter words. The President started so that the tea was shaken out of his cup. Count Alarik regarded Edla seriously and reproachfully.

Edla continued with violent excitement: "There is an overseer, and there are prisoners. The former assigns work to the latter, and when they neglect it, he punishes them. He exacts the fulfilment of duties, but gives neither the tenderness nor the joy which makes duty light. But why complain of it?" she added, casting up a glance full of anger and despair, "the lesser life is but a counterpart of the higher, and home is an image of the world's order."

"Miss Edla!" said Count Alarik, warningly.

The President was violently affected, but restrained himself, and turning to Count Alarik, said with a specious calmness: "Is it not wonderful, my dear Count, that man so often embitters his own days, and then complains impatiently at the suffering he has himself caused? My late wife——" (the President became moved, as he almost always did when he named her); "poor Frederika made me the happiest of husbands; if she had lived, she would likewise have made me a happy father, for she would have taught her daughters that mildness and concession which alone can gain love; she would have taught them to deserve a father's tenderness, who desired nothing better than to see all his children happy around him, and to clasp them to his bosom."

The President was moved, and evidently ready for reconciliation. Not so Edla; the long pent-up poison of bitterness was boiling up in her.

"Love alone," she said, "wins return of love. That father who gave his child life, and did not give it tenderness, and does not give it joy, has no right to make any claims."

"No right?" said the President with warmth, and too excited to be able to weigh his words. "No right! But you! you can never be wrong, you must always be right. But if I have no right to claim from you some compliance and obedience, I have at least a right to free myself and my house from discomfort and disquiet. For the last three years you have not given me one single joyful day; you have yourself evidently shown that you despise your father's counsel, and dislike his house; if in future this does not become

other than it has been heretofore, then it is best that—that we part!”

“It will then be my affair,” said Edla coldly and growing pale, “to give place. I shall soon no longer give discomfort and disquiet to any one.”

She arose, laid aside her work, and was about to go. Count Alarik seized her arm. “Child!” said he softly, “no precipitance! Miss Edla, you are wrong; bethink yourself!”

She stopped and looked wildly at him. “What shall I do?” she asked.

“You have been wrong. Confess it. Beg your father’s forgiveness.”

“No!” said she violently, as she sought to disengage her arm; but Count Alarik held it fast, and conducting her aside, spoke earnestly to her in a low voice.

The President, perfectly beside himself, began to sing; Adelaide went to him with tears in her eyes; Countess Augusta sat deadly pale, and I knew not what to do. In this moment we heard a cry of distress from the children’s place of banishment, and a strong light blazed in through the half-open door. We rushed altogether into the room; the curtains of both the windows were in a flame, and even the wall-hangings were on fire. The children stood blowing upwards with all their might, frightened and crying. Count Alarik seized determinedly and pulled down the curtains and hangings of one window, but in so doing his own clothes caught fire. When Adelaide saw this, she threw herself unconsciously into the fire, seeking to extinguish the flames around him. In a moment her light dress burst up in a blaze, and thus suddenly came to pass, that Adelaide and Alarik stood with their arms round each other, enveloped in flames. God of love! if it was thou who hadst arranged this, then forgive that I, by the means of a bucket of cold water, which I in my despair dashed over Adelaide, put an end to both the embrace and the flame.

In the mean time the President was working tempestuously at the other window, and pulled down the curtains on his own head, where the fire consumed what hair he had left. He would have probably come very ill off, had it not been for Edla’s presence of mind. From the first moment she was beside

her father, and assisted him with as much courage as prudence, while she at her own risk prevented him from receiving injury. When the fire was extinguished, she withdrew herself, burnt and in silence, back to her room.

Adelaide was beside herself. She held Count Alarik's hands between her own, looked at him with tenderness through tears of anguish, and nevertheless could not express the question, which was to be read on her features, "Are you hurt?" He again seemed to forget everything only to look at her. Countess Augusta reminded us that Adelaide should go and change her clothes. She retired for this purpose, after she had assured Count Alarik that she had not burnt herself; that she would not make herself uneasy; that she would take care of herself, etc. He had not himself escaped so lightly, but he was the first to joke at the accident, and give it an amusing turn. The President, sooty and angry, looked like a blunderbuss at first, but gradually permitted himself to be pacified by the Count, and there was now an inquisition made, of what had given rise to the fire. It seemed that the little ones must bear the burden of this. They had during their disgrace consoled themselves with divers experiments, and their little taper seemed to have been put to sundry services. Whether they had now really desired to see if the curtains were combustible, or if the conflagration had taken place by chance, it was however impossible to ascertain from any one but themselves. We thought that the fright they had had, together with being seriously found fault with, and adjudged to go supperless to bed, would in future save us from a repetition of similar illuminations.

The President's heart hesitated to agree to the last punishment, which I urged; but when Count Alarik joined with me, he gave way however unwillingly, and said, "You will one day be less resolute, Count, in sending your own children hungry to bed."

The Count answered nothing to this.

As soon as I could free myself, I ran up to Edla. I found Adelaide crying over her, and binding up her burns. Edla was severely injured by the fire, and her mind more than ever excited. I induced Adelaide to go to bed, promising to attend to Edla myself. We were scarcely alone before a couple of lines, written with a pencil upon a scrap of paper,

were given to me; it was the request from Count Alarik that he might come and visit Edla. Regarding him as her future brother-in-law, I thought he might come up. Edla also consented; "He may come," said she; "he may hear all I have to say; he is reasonable and good, and will not blame me; not in everything, at least."

Edla's excitement of mind had now risen to a height which altogether overcame her usual shyness and reserve; it seemed that she must now pour herself out or die; all the consuming gall which had long collected in her heart, now burst forth with a violence which alarmed me. Count Alarik heard her long, without saying a word; an expression of sincere compassion was seen on his manly countenance.

"If you knew," said Edla, "how I have been used, you would not wonder at the unfortunate creature I am. I was not a wicked child; I affectionately loved my parents, particularly my father; I would have willingly given my life for him—and then—with such goodwill, with so tender a heart—never to receive a friendly word—continual animadversions, continual reproaches and scoldings! and why? because I was ugly, because nature had denied me all agreeable gifts, because I was unfortunate! I was seven years old, when my father one day caressed me—I remember it yet as if it had been yesterday—a sign that it was an uncommon event. And afterwards, at such a tender age, to be sent from my father's home—to return there as a stranger, and always to be treated as such! Father's and mother's love, caresses and encouragements, joy, all, all were for Adelaide."

"Are you envious of Adelaide?" asked I sorrowfully.

Edla was silent a moment, and then said: "If it were possible to hate Adelaide, I should have done it, but who could hate Adelaide? nay, how difficult to avoid loving her? I should have hated every other than Adelaide in her place. Oh! do you see it is not so easy, not so pleasant, to ardently thirst for love and friendship—for something good, some joy; and to see all, all snatched away, by one more fortunate—even my dog, my little bird, forsook me for her. And what advantages possessed she over me?—beauty, the power of pleasing, rich gifts of nature; they were not her merits, she had not given them to herself! Why was I so destitute of all, so poor—and then punished for my poverty?"

"My sweet Edla," said I, "do not speak so; it is not right, it is not christian."

"Christian or not, it is true—and speak I will, once in my life at least; after that I will be silent; believe me I cannot be silent—I will finish with what I had to say of Adelaide. Her softness has softened me towards her; I envy her not; I would not take anything from her—but I also will have something. I had in my childhood one determined bias, one single taste."

"And that was——?" asked Count Alarik attentively.

"I do not know well what I should call it—a love of investigation—I would explore everything, I would know the causes and origin of everything I saw. If I had been permitted to addict myself to this propensity and received some direction, perhaps my life would not have remained without interest or use. But exactly that which I loved was denied me; my favourite though childish occupations were laughed at, though nothing was given me to love in their place: I was forced to labour at that for which I had neither taste nor capacity; I was forced to seek in the world an enjoyment which I could never find in it. Gradually I became so discordant with myself that I had no longer a distinct thought, nor a taste for anything. Now it is over with me; I am so discontented, so unhappy, so uncertain, that I can find no more peace or quiet. Life and man are nauseous to me; I hate myself. I know that I am not good—you think me perhaps wicked—you may be right; but who has made me so, who has embittered my heart? on whom should the blame fall? I see before me a life at which I shudder, for God and man are against me. There is but one means to avoid it."

"And this one means?" demanded Count Alarik, as he contemplated her sharply.

"Suicide."

I shuddered; but Count Alarik smiled, and said:

"The usual refuge of weakness!" and we should say with Shakspeare, "make death proud to take us."

Edla blushed. She had pronounced this word "suicide," as if she had said something great. She blushed deeply at Count Alarik's smile and words.

Count Alarik now spoke to Edla seriously and strongly, though mildly. He granted the justice of a part of her com-

plaints; but he showed her in her own disposition, in her claims, her pride and bitterness, the chief sources of her sufferings. He sought to make her perceive, that by speaking openly and tenderly with the President, she would probably have won that freedom which she was now without; and that she, by returning harshness for harshness, had closed the way to his heart. His words were the powerful words of truth. He did not spare Edla, but he showed in the very punishment that he respected her; and while he did this, he was so noble, so beautiful to contemplate.

Edla was struck and shaken; she wept.

Count Alarik then spoke to her with gentle words of consolation, and his voice was real music; he assured her that she might yet be happy; he promised to assist her in becoming so, and finished with these words:

“We are all in this life, to a certain degree, placed under the power of circumstances; it is through their influence that you partly suffer, but an eternal order stands immovable beyond; to enter into this, to find our place in this, should be our chief endeavour, and is possible for all. And then nothing more can again essentially disturb our freedom and our happiness.”

Edla looked full of hope up to her noble teacher, but I saw that she did not understand him. Count Alarik promised in future to explain himself more fully, and now only exacted from Edla, that she should make peace with her father, and herself take the first step towards reconciliation. She wished to resist; but Count Alarik, partly by joke, partly by earnest persuasion, made her blush for this despicable, this false pride; and showed her, moreover, so strongly how reprehensible her conduct with her father had been during the evening, that Edla with uncommon humility agreed to what he desired. It was now, however, too late, for the President had already gone to bed.

When we had left Edla's room to go into mine, the Count said to me: “We must now before everything seek to quiet Edla, and give her a milder mood of mind, by letting her catch a glimpse of a harmonious order of things, which remains the same spite of all apparent contradictions—an eternal goodness, eternally active, spite of suffering upon earth. She must discover that there is a power in man to

bear all the world's darknesses as mere shadows. I have something written by a young friend, which I think will prove useful in exciting better and clearer thoughts in Edla. I shall leave you the manuscript; read it to her some of these days, quite quietly in her room; afterwards, we shall gradually seek to open a path for her, which shall not alone conduct her to clearness regarding herself, but give her also what every human being requires—an interest in life, and a sphere for activity. She has a powerful soul, an acute power of thought I will not rest till I see her happy."

I thanked him from my inmost heart for his goodness. Before we parted he looked about, and asked which was Adelaide's room; he stood exactly at her door; I made him aware of it.

"Here!" he said, as a happy smile passed over his countenance—"here!" and he laid his hand on the lock.

"Heavens! what are you thinking of, Count?" said I, astounded.

He looked at me and smiled, and turned again towards the door; it seemed as if he was whispering something, and I am not certain whether he did not kiss the door. When he left it, he went to the sleeping children, looked at them; "Aha!" said he, "here lie the little incendiaries looking like angels. They do not dream that he who advised that they should go hungry to bed, takes the liberty of coming so near them." He kissed their rosy cheeks, wished me good night, looked once again at Adelaide's door, and disappeared.

After he was gone I went softly in to Adelaide, to see if she was awake, and how she found herself after the fire and water trials. She was awake, and stretching her arms to me, said: "Is he gone? I heard his voice in Edla's room. O tell me, what has he said?"

I repeated the conversation to her as fully as possible. Adelaide's eyes glistened through tears. "How good is he!" exclaimed she; "how noble he is, how well he speaks; he will certainly help that poor Edla."

Thus speaking of him and of her, midnight passed unremarked; and we entered on the new day. I compared Alarik and Otto—and, poor Otto!

"Otto is good, loves me," said Adelaide, becoming serious; "let him alone. All cannot be intellectual. Otto is as God made him."

Edla had fever on the following morning, but notwithstanding accompanied Adelaide down to the President, to fulfil the promise she had made to Count Alarik.

The President had been touched with her behaviour during the fire, and to her entreaty only answered, mildly: "Let us forgive each other's faults, Edla."

Thereupon he began with much interest to inquire after her burns. They were not trifling. They—but still more her excited state of mind—were the cause that she was confined to bed several days after with strong fever. The President visited her twice a day while it lasted, but both father and daughter were embarrassed and constrained with each other. After what had taken place, the relationship between them became rather worse than better. The President took care not to wound Edla with recollections and reproaches, but he became evidently more cold and distant with her; and she avoided him as much as she could. Too much had been said, and too little. The scene on that unlucky day had broken up a secret wound, but without providing means of cure.

When misunderstanding and constrained intercourse arise between friends, or between members of a family, they seldom pass without a crisis, and an explanation—but these are dangerous moments of revolution, and for once that they wrench out the wounding thorn, it happens thrice that they press it in the deeper. Ah, why do we find it so difficult freely to forgive, freely to forget? We nourish our wrong, we meditate upon it, we desire to have some right, some recompense, and thus warm the serpent's egg in our bosoms. "Blessed are the peace-makers!" Blessed are the good, who forget, who forgive, even without thinking, "I forgive!"

AN INVITATION TO DANCE.

Adelaide was zealous in the nursing of her sister, but Edla showed so little pleasure in it that gradually all the care of her fell on me, whom she preferred to see by her. It seemed as if Edla's diseased sense was at this moment wounded by the sight of youth and beauty. And now also came the Baroness again, with a thousand plans and projects for amusement; Adelaide allowed herself to be captivated by them, and was carried away from us by the whirl of the world.

When Count Alarik came in the evenings, he often found Adelaide away, and it required all Countess Augusta's prudence and cleverness to excite him to take part, or have any interest in the conversation; however, her efforts usually succeeded. Count Alarik so easily took fire at the mention of any important question, of any great idea, and then it was a pleasure to hear him. "Why is not Adelaide here?" I often thought to myself, uneasy and dissatisfied. I was offended with Countess Augusta that she should be so interesting; I was offended with Count Alarik that he should let himself be so enlivened when Adelaide was absent. I was discontent with Adelaide that she should be so weak as to yield to the Baroness's persuasions, when she herself only desired to be at home, now at least when Count Alarik was with us. The President on the contrary was heartily rejoiced; Count Alarik had become really dear to him, and he was proud at the thought of calling him son.

"I think," said he, "our Count will declare himself soon; he seems to me to be already quite at home with Augusta; and Otto dances with Adelaide; everything is as it ought to be, everything is very well. Ha! Mamselle Rönquist! sweet little *bonne amie!* They will make two handsome couples; at their wedding we shall dance an *anglaise* together"—and he rubbed his hands in the joy of his heart.

The President every now and then engaged me for this country-dance when he was elated. But this only dance that I was ever to dance with him appeared to me very doubtful. Meanwhile I thanked him most humbly every time.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SICK ROOM.

Take care! take care!

Go softly there!

The doctors will

That we keep her still.—*The Sick Nurse.*

IN all time it has been the custom to sing the praise of health and the sun,—to-day I will praise sickness and shadows—I will praise thee, thou bodily pain, when thou layest thy hand upon the head and heart of man, and sayest to his soul's sorrows, "It is enough!" Thou hast been called an

evil upon earth; O! but often thou art a good, a healing balsam, under whose influence the soul reposes, after its hard struggles, and its wild storms are quieted; more than once hast thou turned away suicide, and saved from madness. The terrible, the bitter words which burned the heart, are gradually effaced by the troubled dreams of fever; the horrible, which recently was so near, withdraws itself far into the distance. We forget—God be praised! we forget! and when with a weakened frame we rise from our sick-bed, our soul often wakes, as it were, from a long night to a new morning. There is so much which contributes during bodily sickness to soften the mind; the silent room, the mild twilight which the closed blinds produce, the gentle voices; and then, beyond all, the kind words of those who surround us, their cares, their anxiety, yea, perhaps a blessed tear in their eye—O! all this does good, does much good; and when the wise Solomon named on earth all the good things which have their time, he forgot amongst these to praise also sickness. —One evening, when Adelaide was at a ball, and the children already in their dreams, I sat alone by Edla. The night-lamp burnt with a mild and agreeable light, all was quiet around us, only now and then rolled a carriage with a deadened sound in the street below us, and made the lamp-light tremble. Edla lay motionless on her bed, and seemed to be better. I asked her if she did not think that on the following day she would be able to get up. Discouraged, but without bitterness, she answered: “I do not know. Why should I get up? No one will be gladdened by it, and I have nothing to do with life! The sun shines on unhappy and useless beings enough without me! The sick-bed has a charm for me, it reminds me of a yet quieter bed, where one is still more at rest.”

I did not answer, but reflected if I might venture to propose the reading of the manuscript which Count Alarik had left with me. I rather wished that Edla herself should ask me to read something to her, and I was happy when she said, “Read something to me which will do me good, or rather which will make me good, for I require it.”

I brought the manuscript, said from whom I received it, and read aloud.

I sought to make my voice softer, however, without affectation; I took care not to stumble in the words, for I knew

by experience how much the voice and pronunciation can operate on the human mind, and I sincerely desired that Edla in every respect might receive a beneficial impression. A few words were written by Count Alarik, as an introduction to the manuscript itself:

“A young cavalry officer, a relation of mine, the darling of his family, and high in the esteem of all, fell some years ago the victim of a lingering disease. It was not accounted dangerous, and he was desired to travel to try a continental bath. He set out full of hope. His friends and family made themselves sure of seeing him, ere long, return with recovered health; but from the stranger-land he never returned. He was an uncommonly amiable and promising young man, pure as the snow on his native mountains; manly and vigorous in thought and action; his heart was affectionate, his temper gay; his soul shone from his eyes. He was loved, and happy as but few are. The following reflections appear to have been written but shortly before his death. They were found amongst his papers.”

THE MANUSCRIPT.

Some days ago I learnt that I shall soon die. A doctor on my serious demand has told me so. I shall soon die! I would willingly have lived; I am not at this moment strong to face death. Ah! I have so much to love, so much to live for. I would so willingly have done something good in the world. Yet were it not for my sufferings I should perhaps yet cling closer to life; but these are hard to bear.

To fall asleep, the long sleep in my mother's house, in the arms of all my own—to fall on the field of battle, fighting for my dear native land—this had not been difficult. But so alone—so un-renowned to die—on a sick-bed, far from all that I love—this oppresses me. But I will not complain; I will resign myself. My fate is not harder than that of millions; I will yet, ere the shadow of death hath enfeebled my thoughts, seek what can give comfort to all these and to me. I will seek to fathom the depth and breadth of that consolation which even in this moment I feel within me, and make it yet more living to my heart; for more difficult moments than these, worse pains await me yet, before all is over.

I shall soon die! die? My soul has yet too much life to be able to seize this certainty—this deep, deep sleep. My soul was full of other images—images of glory, of love, of joy. It is, however, certain I shall soon die; the bird which flies over my head, the flowers which are growing in the field, have a longer future than I. The hand which writes this shall, ere long, consume in earth; and the eye that guides the hand, before a month is out, shall be the prey of worms! Well! and if it shall be so, while it yet wakes, it will look thee in the face, thou pale destroyer of life—Death! Thy pall, which thou soon shalt lay around me, shall not affright me. I am now alone with thee, thou terrible and wonderful one, who from my youth I have viewed as a fearful and repulsive form. I will contemplate thee nearer, before thou takest me by the hand; perhaps when I have done so, I shall follow thee more willingly.—Death!—Since life has been on earth, Death has been there too! The flowers burst forth from the ground in spring; they bloom awhile, but autumn kills them all. The animals are born, play, pair, build their dwellings, bring forth their young, and then die, serving as a prey one to another. And man? As from a sleep he gradually awakes to consciousness; glances around him on earth, and up to heaven, and understands and adores. A higher aspiration fills his breast, and glimpses of eternal truths pierce to his soul; but there as he stands, and aspires and grasps, with unsatisfied desires, and having brought nothing to perfection, so Death seizes on him, and it is over with him—he is carried away from earth! What he leaves is a remembrance in the minds of a few, and a little food for worms—he is dead! Some die too early, before they have been able to produce anything upon earth. All which receives life must die; everywhere, wherever I turn my eyes, I see death, death, death! and the lifeless mountains are the only eternal things on earth. Why then doth it bear other than these? Those beings who love, who in the world take root in each other in suffering and hope, and who afterwards must be torn from each other, and must die—why are they here? Why all this that is lovely, which must cease—all this strength which shall come to nought; and before all, why these sparks which perish in their birth, these lives which

never have tasted joy, these deep sufferings? to come finally to silence, to sink in earth? the earth which shall equalise all, and efface all. Shall my heart despair; perishing in these sorrowful thoughts, in these dark questions? It shall not! —O God! on Thee, whom I learned to adore since the days of my childhood; on Thee, whom I feel in the depths of my soul to live, whom I worship in the holy voice of my conscience, in all that I see good and fair upon earth—on Thee my heart and my thoughts are firmly anchored, as the first and only origin of all life and all thought. *Thou art!*—that I believe. Thou art holy, and full of love. Thou art the God of goodness—this I feel; this I sincerely believe. I understand myself no longer, nor what I love in my fellow-creatures, their love, their virtue, nor the holy MUST which is written in the human breast, which holds the world together—all is to me a mystery, if I believe not upon Thee! My Maker! with Thy best gifts—with this heart which can love Thee, with this mind which can raise itself to contemplate Thee, with this will, powerful to hear and to obey Thee—I will and must adore Thee! Deep in my soul hast Thou written Thy name, and in this moment, O my God! when I am going to meet a destruction, whose nature I do not know—when I go to that land whence none have ever yet returned—where I, already a shade, sink amongst shades, and with every day feel the powers of my soul failing me—in this moment I can doubt of all, only not of Thee, only not of Thy goodness and Thy power! Thou art my God!—But this God on whom I believe, whose goodness and power are as certain to me as the love in my own breast, it is not He who created pain and death—not death such as it now shows itself on earth, surrounded by pain and darkness. The works in which Infinite goodness has expressed itself, must bear his image; the spirits, born of His thought, must be holy and perfect spirits; that nature in which they reflect themselves, pure and without fault. God's eternal law of love is written in the spirits' heart; it directs their energy, and the world obeys this law of eternal goodness and holiness. The spirits do not blindly follow this law; they follow it in freedom and consciousness; they are furnished with judgment and will; they have the power to comprehend God's

will, and in freedom to make it their own; and their bliss and their true freedom express itself in these words: 'Thy will, O my God, I do willingly.'

Good and all-wise must be that Eternal and unalterable will—for change is only in time, and God rules time. All God's works are good, and eternal as himself—every life which proceeds from Him, receives from Him that perfection and bliss which according to its nature it is capable of receiving; the free spirit first, after that the animals, and in the least worm or flower He yet lives with life and joy. All, all is transfused by His love! As a lover lives in his beloved, so God lives in His creation, living and making happy; as a bride lives in her bridegroom, so must the world love and adore God—

And is this then the relation in that part of the world which I see, amongst the spiritual beings which I know—amongst men? Ah! it is not so! God made man in His image, that I believe, and it cannot be otherwise. "How art thou fallen from heaven, thou bright star of the morning!" Whence sin in the heart of man—whence the eclipse in his and nature's life—whence suffering on earth, disorder, destruction, death? Whence death? Whence this almost insupportable pain, which brings the sweat to my brow, and is gradually bringing me to the dark grave? O my God! God of goodness, on Thee I believe, by Thee I hold fast!—Man was born sinful, or inclined to sin, and strife and pain have existed in nature as long as we remember. Man and his world are the work of God, the most Holy, the Almighty.—That God did not create man sinful, or the world imperfect, is my full conviction. Has man then existed before this life on earth? Went he pure and perfect from the hand of his Maker and fell? Has he in his fall drawn down with him his world—nature? Is his forgetfulness of this pre-existence a consequence of his fall, a suspension of his higher consciousness during his earthly regeneration? Are the heavenly sparks which sometimes yet kindle in him, the good, the beautiful, are they a remembrance of his former life with God? do they explain, together with the phenomenon of sin upon earth, a lost paradise? How could man, a perfect work of God, fall? What was it which could force his fall in a world, where God, the all-good, was the only

influencing principle? A thousand questions cross each other in my brain—— where find I a satisfactory answer?

* * * * *

God cannot have created man sinful; pure and glorious he must have come from his hands. He must have been so when he commenced this earthly life; he has fallen from his original glory, and with him all nature. His regeneration upon this earth, and in these circumstances, must be a consequence of his fall. How has man fallen? By allowing himself to be overcome by temptation, say the traditions of our race. Who tempted him? Not God; so surely as God is, impossible! The devil? I cannot believe in the devil as an individual existence, nor in sin as a power. If there were an individual existence opposed to God in will, eternal as he is—a sovereign power of a dominion in enmity to that of God—there would then be no reason to call this power, sin;—to his adorers ought to be offered, even as to those of God, eternal life—that is to say, the perfection of that life which they loved; for instance, pleasure, hatred, envy, selfishness, cruelty, etc.

If one could conceive of evil as of an independent, connected power, it might be as a power overcome in the contest with the so-called good; not overcome as evil, but from deficiency in strength; and Byron's Lucifer would then have reason to say:

He as a conqueror will call the conquered,
Evil; but what will be the good he gives?
 Were I the victor, *his* works would be deemed
 The only evil ones."

But evil, on the contrary, reveals itself everywhere, not as an organising power, but as a dissevering, destroying power. What then is evil? Perhaps it was originally a servant of the good—as the shadow is of light, but which departed from his appointed duties,—a servant who, possessing himself of his lord's apparel, endeavoured, disguised in them, to assume his part,—a power which expresses nothing but the impotence of the fallen spirit, which is tyrannised over by its own misguided imagination, in proportion as it closes itself to that which is divine.

I shall not with my enfeebled powers seek to plunge into the depths of the metaphysical abyss, which with the fulness

of my former powers I was unable to fathom; as an explanation of the reality of evil, and its influence in the fall of man from the order of creation imposed by God, I will repose on the following:

God, as the idea of all good, as the living God, excludes evil in all His existence. This exclusion permits notwithstanding the possibility of evil—therefore a choice (the conditions of freedom), God's choice is made from all eternity; man shall himself verify it for himself (thus alone is he free); but in the choice lies the representation of evil (temptation), representation produces desire, and desire produces sin.

Man from a state of childhood and innocence passes to one of independence and freedom. He had the free choice between a happy reality, and an empty image of supposed good; he allowed himself to be tempted by the latter. God's image became darkened within him, he fell, and nature fell asunder in warring elements. But he had freedom and power to remain faithful, and his fall is his own fault, and the consequences one and all must be ascribed to himself. His situation here on earth, his subjection to matter, his sin, his bodily and mental sufferings, the whole disorganisation of life in all its parts, all is a consequence of his fall.

But God, the eternal Goodness, the highest Love, will He forsake his fallen, His unhappy child? Will He do less than a mother does for hers? O no! He will never turn away His face, He will seek His child, He will call it, He will suffer, He will give His heart's blood to win it again, to reconcile it to Himself. If God in holy worlds, lives as the giver of bliss, on earth He must live as the Reconciler. This hymn of anguish and home sickness, which before the memory of man has risen from the earth—this ardent cry: "Lord, come!" is from eternity to eternity answered by, "Here, my child!"

"Here, my child!" Yes, my God, upon this Word, upon this advent, with all his heart, thy child believes, and by the light of the doctrine of reconciliation he sees life, and the world clears itself to his regards. If I believe on God, the All-good and full of love, so do I also believe upon the Reconciler of the world; believe that that life, which the heart seeks, really exists, and willingly extends itself to us, believe that it is continually approaching us nearer and nearer, until it has

vanquished all difficulties, and has fully and intimately united itself with us. I believe that our God is no repelling God; believe that he will give us all—all—the fulness of His life—Himself—believe that he, as Eternal Love, will suffer for and with us, until He fully lives within us.

I believe, therefore, that ever since the regeneration of man upon the earth, the work of reconciliation has had its beginning; that everything great and good, which history has to show, is a work of this spirit, of this eternal Word, which lives and glows over the world, as the sun over the blossom, as the mother over her child; and communicates its life in such proportion as the awakening world is capable of receiving. I also believe that in the moment the world is ripe for it, that the work of reconciliation shall be completed, and God shall descend upon earth, in the most intimate communion with man. Something must then remain in life, in the history of man, which shall fully reveal to him the love of God—love which will call forth a return of love; something which must awaken man to a lively sense of his fall, of his sin, powerfully recal the memory of his Father's house, of a lost holiness and purity, which will give him will and power to conquer the evil within himself, and be born again, a child of God; something which shall annul the terrors and powers of death, and explain life—— I know to whom I shall go to find what I seek. I will go to Him, who, holy Himself, called man to the highest holiness, to likeness with God; who proclaimed God's kingdom upon earth; who suffered, who was tempted, who combated like a man, who conquered like a God; to Him to whom the powers of nature were subject when He commanded it. I will go to Him who was crucified, to Him who has risen again, to the Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth—to "God who through Christ is reconciling the world to Himself."

* * * * *

The pages of history lie open before me, and I think I feel the breath of the spirit of the times during their stream through the world. Some few pages are filled with the story of the Mediator; but a mighty spirit, full of peace and resurrection, proceeds from these, and renews the life of the world. Sunk in this, convinced of this, the moral difficulties

which I once found in the life of Jesus disturb me no more ; I feel it to be certain as I live, certain as that I believe in God,—that here is God announced to the earth, that through this hath He justified Himself; the kingdom of heaven has come near unto us—the work of reconciliation is completed.

Deep in my inmost soul, I experience that so it is. That God on whom I believe, is He another than whom Christianity has announced? The power by which I can combat evil within myself, is it not love to that God who loved the world so much that he gave his only Son as a propitiation for its sins? O Heart of Creation! O Bread of Life, which giveth Thyself to us—I believe it, I sincerely believe it; in Thee, and through Thee alone, have we eternal life—the fulness of God's life.—Thou camest down to man, that man might ascend to God. The Father has bowed Himself down to the child, that he might lift it up to His breast!

St. Martin says: "We are climbing up in this life, as if on a ladder. In death this ladder is snatched from us, and we then stand in that region of life to which we had ourselves arisen." See, in consequence, Jesus's effort to lift us up to the highest step—the threshold of God's kingdom.

Even on this earth God wills that man shall partake of the fulness of this life; but what before all does Christianity say? "*God is love!*" He will therefore never cease to desire the delivery of man; here, there, in eternity, He will labour for it. God is the only principle, ever the same, ever active. O, certainly the time will come when the Son, the eternal Word, shall have subdued all to the Father, the eternal Thought.

Life is the development of a noble drama. The scene which we now, and perhaps long afterwards, take part in, is called reconciliation. When we have again entered into God's eternal order, then our life will be developed in undisturbed freedom and happiness, and the drama is then the development of the eternal Love, in all the spheres of life. Unspeakable presentiments gather themselves around me. Like the beams of a newly-lighted sun, they dart over the world, and seek to illuminate all its parts—Ah! but shadows are gathering round me, and like a weary wanderer my thoughts already—

Before they sink in sleep, to Thee will I go, my celestial

Teacher, and hear the words thou saidst to thy disciples when like me thou stoodest on the borders of the grave:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

“In my Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

“I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go unto the Father.”

“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am.”

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one:”

“I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”

A quiet joy sinks over my heart, the darkness scatters itself, God’s splendid light illumines life, and all its misconstructions are explained. What then is death in thy life and thy doctrine, O Jesus? only a moment of passage to a spiritual life for the good; the door through which they enter into a happier state, in full possession of that freedom they have acquired! My breast is now lightened, my eye cleared, and I will cry with the Apostle: “O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?”

Death has approached near unto me; may he come, he is my friend. For all my weakness, all my sins, forgive me, O my God! My native land, my friends, my mother, my sisters, farewell! I leave you, but I know I shall meet you again. Willingly, ye beloved of my heart, had I in bidding ye farewell wished once again to press your hands upon earth—but it cannot be—well then, God’s will be done! God’s name be praised!

When I had finished reading, I looked at Edla. She had clasped her hands over her heart, her tears flowed abundantly, but silently; I took care not to disturb her, suspecting that she felt a deep and beneficial emotion. And oh! when the

poor sick heart sees the doctor approach, when it first conceives that there is a balsam for all the wounds of life, when the hot brain so lately martyred by a thousand doubts, lays itself to rest on the bosom of eternal goodness; oh! then there passes in the mind that which reason cannot seize, that which the pen cannot write, that which alone with quiet and delicious tears one can feel. *Reconciliation!* reconciliation with God, with life, with oneself, is the heavenly sentiment which gradually pierces the heart's core, which cools each so lately throbbing pulse, which effaces each lately so painful doubt. Goodness, heavenly goodness, thou art the balsam of life—"May thy kingdom come!"

Hour after hour now passed, and Edla and I spoke not a word; she lay still, and I had never seen on her face so calm and so clear an expression. At one o'clock the carriages began to roll, and expecting Adelaide, I rose to go. Adelaide had the childish propensity, when she returned from a ball where she had not supped, to eat gingerbread; and I took a pleasure in always having, when she returned from any party, some ready for her, which I had myself baked after a recipe I had received from my departed cousin, Beata Hvardagstag, and which was much better than any that could be purchased, even at Mrs. Dorf's. I wished to go, that I might have my little dish in order, and therefore bid Edla good night. She asked to retain the manuscript.

"It has made," she said, "a wonderful impression upon me, and has strengthened a presentiment which I always had of a pre-existence, of a lost happy state. In reading the verses of our noblest bards; when I have heard fine music, or contemplated a beautiful face, dim images of a majestic and lost antiquity have risen in my soul, and more than once caused within me a melancholy and incomprehensible longing, which I cannot describe. But if pre-existence is a truth; if we have all existed before this life, whence comes the general and profound forgetfulness thereof, together with the cause which has forced our life to this disorganised state?"

"This forgetfulness must be caused by the very fall itself," I answered; "the higher consciousness of man has fallen asleep, and this sleep continues in certain respects even during this life. It is now night, but in the morning, when the sun

arises, we shall be able also to see yesterday clearly—the past and the present.”

“Now,” said Edla, “I begin to understand the words Count Alarik said that evening. Oh! if an eternal goodness directs the world, if a necessary will gives the law, then must I also become happy—at least not unhappy.”

“Happy! happy! that I sincerely hope!” answered I, and embracing her tenderly, went to my gingerbread and my Adelaide, who, good, gay, and beautiful as an angel, returned from the ball. Adelaide ate her gingerbread with hearty satisfaction. I looked at her, heard her account of the events of the ball, thought that Edla was happy, and felt that even in this fallen world there are very many pleasant moments.

From this time a remarkable change took place in Edla. She sought solitude in her room, where she occupied herself with reading. When she was in company, her manners were gentler and calmer; but a shade of melancholy, an expression of deep discouragement, appeared in her whole person. I saw Count Alarik follow her with attention; and, as it were, watch over the development of her soul. One evening, when by accident Edla and I were alone with him, he turned the conversation on happiness, and the means of conducting to it. He said that there was an element common to all, and without which none could reach a durable and real happiness; but that within this was a numberless quantity of different yet not divided elements, from which each individual could choose his own, and organise there his world in harmony with the great whole. He thought that the happiness of man depends upon his living after God's decrees, and finding for his soul a sphere of activity in which to develop his powers—by which he could express himself, and whence he could receive nourishment to further development. “Wanting one or other of these elements,” he said, “life would always feel a void.”

“O my presentiment!” said Edla, who had long sat silent and attentive. Count Alarik enabled her by his eager questions to overcome her shyness, and express herself more clearly.

“The manuscript which you gave me,” said Edla, “and the reading of that book on which its comfort is grounded, has really sent a light into my soul, and done me inexpressible

good. I believe on what it says, I believe on an all-good God, on His grace over us all, and yet"—and tears forced themselves into her eyes—"and yet I am not happy—life yet seems barren to me, and I am yet a burden to myself."

She wiped away her tears, and continued with calmness and perspicuity. "I have heard the peace and joy which religious occupations give to the soul, much praised. I have tried them"—she continued, blushing deeply—"in the church, as well as in my solitary room, I have striven to call down heaven to fill my poor hungering spirit."

"And you have not succeeded?" asked Count Alarik, with an expression of the greatest sympathy.

"No!" answered Edla, and to conceal her emotion she was silent.

"And," continued Count Alarik, "you thought that this means of happiness was not a real one, but only considered as such by enthusiastical and distempered minds?"

"I thought," answered Edla with regained composure, "that this means, however good and blessed to so many, was not so for me. I will not set it aside, but it is not enough. My soul requires another sort of food—I cannot command that continued exaltation of mind which such an occupation requires, without its becoming heavy and deadening. When I have succeeded in raising my mind to real ecstasy, and lived in it some few blessed moments, my soul falls again for many hours into a state of weakness and distaste; my own existence, my own being, oppress me then more than ever. I am not heavenly enough to live merely on heavenly food—I know not; happy are the pious!"

Here the conversation was broken off, by the Baroness returning from the opera with Adelaide.

The same evening Edla found on her toilet a packet containing several books. Among these were "Grubbe's Code of Society," "Forsell's Statistics," "Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*," "Agardh's *Organography*," Plato's works in a German translation, etc. On a slip of paper which lay among the books, the following lines were written:

"To contemplate God's works, to make oneself acquainted with their organisation, is a true worship and a beneficent practice of devotion. The world becomes rich to man in proportion as he looks about in it. The life of the thinker is

beautiful as that of the lover. God has planted flowers of enjoyment on this world for all his creatures. Each and all shall find those destined for them, if they only seek with spirit and industry." Edla accepted this gift with pleasure and surprise.

Count Alarik and I now both occupied ourselves with devising a plan for Edla's future studies, convinced as we both were that, during a course of study which would develop the faculties of her soul, and give her an opportunity of understanding her own position, she would soon learn her own powers, and find out the way to her own happiness. Count Alarik sought to let her view life as an organic whole, and the written questions he left to her to answer were so arranged that the objects they concerned cast light on one another. These objects related to all the spheres of life : religion and morals ; philosophy and history ; arts, science, and literature. The Count was an enlightened man, and too generous to fear that a woman could become too learned or too enlightened ; he saw for her, as for man, no other bounds to acquirement than that which the individual's own intellectual powers prescribe. He considered those of Edla to be great, and cultivated them with seriousness and affection. As regarded Edla, her love for learning soon became a passion, and it required force to check her. To the questions which were given her, in the beginning she made very defective answers, but they very soon became clear and comprehensive. She read the Grecian philosopher's works day and night, and made extracts and observations from his pages.

It was a very fortunate circumstance that just at this time the President was so taken up by his business that he either was occupied in his own room or out of doors, so that he was not able to watch over his daughter's occupations. He assured me that he put full confidence in me, and made himself certain that his own and his late wife's principles would be conscientiously pursued by me, in all that regarded his daughter's education. I was silent ; somewhat embarrassed by these speeches ; and Edla laboured undisturbed whole days in her room, and became meanwhile clearer in her views, and gayer and more friendly with every one.

Ah ! we should not preach so much to people ; we should give them an interest in life, something to love, something to

live for; we should, if possible, make them happy, or put them on the way to happiness—then they would unquestionably become good.

CHAPTER IX.

SOMETHING ABOUT ADAM AND HIS SONS.

Adam lay sunk in a dreamy contemplation of the young creation, and collected the scattered traits of its undimmed beauty. Finally, he was able to collect it together in one single living form, and that form approached nearer to him, and developed yet more distinctly its heavenly image. He did not remark that it was his own personality which developed itself from the one growth to another, till God gave name to woman—then Adam awoke, and found that he was a man.—Expound me the saga! Of all truths, this is the deepest, that there is no life without finding the image in the reflecting image—and these are one—one single living soul.—*Extract of a Letter from B—*.

ONE son of Adam, Count Alarik W., wrote to another son of Adam, the Reverend Albert P.:

“Man is a wonderful creature, my good Albert! This bright discovery must naturally be followed by some highly original ideas, which again will lead you to something with which you are quite unacquainted. Patience! What every human being seeks in every land, and in every situation, is happiness; enjoyment of himself and of his life. But how thousandfold, various, and dissimilar his conceptions of this happiness, and the means of attaining it! (Have you ever heard anything equal this before?) It was not long ago that the philosophers of Europe wished to persuade us that this happiness was not really anything positive, but that it altogether depended on the influence of climate, and upon the peculiar character of each individual. They saw in the natives of Kamptschatka, happy in their supper of train-oil, in the voluptuous Hindoo, in the animal gratifications of the Hottentots, charming examples of living, as excellent, nay, more excellent, than those of the educated European, enjoying his life according to a high system of morality, and a refined sense of the beautiful. A state of nature has certainly its good and advantageous side; culture has its inconveniences, its miserable consequences, it is true. It is, however, easy to ascribe to both their place on the Jacob's ladder of the world's history.

“In our times, the means of purely and truly enjoying life are numerous. May there not, however, be a condition which

is pre-eminently worthy of man, and as he is regarded by God, and as a citizen of a commonwealth, in which he most freely can improve his existence, and come to the full enjoyment of his life as a man, and as a reasonable creature? in which he can fully live, according to all the powers which God has given him, and employ all to his glory?

“You will say this is going very round about merely to say that one will marry! And I will say that you are right: but when, I, myself, have not lightly come to this conclusion, it is not more than reasonable that you should partake my troubles——

* * * * *

“I have just now received your letter of the tenth, and am obliged to come straight to the matter. You wish me joy of my marriage with Countess Augusta U., which you have heard by report, but never was it further from my wishes than now. I love with all my heart a young, beautiful, good, gay, and bewitching being, Adelaide, another daughter of President G. You know how high and holy I consider the engagement of marriage; how important, therefore, the choice of a friend in the most intimate communion of this life must be to me.

“When I set out from my old hall to look for some one to embellish it for me, I gave beforehand a passport to Love, and was well determined not to let him mix in my affairs; for I love to see, to try, to choose with open eyes, and would not trust myself to a guide, who, according to my conviction, was naturally blind. You know how highly I estimate true and highly-cultivated reason in a woman; and I required in life, not only a friend for my heart, but a reflecting and enlightened being, who would give life to my thinking by hers, who would feel warmly for the interests of humanity, and understand how to judge what is great, what is fair amongst these. Not merely a gentle breast against which to lean my head, not merely an amiable hostess for my friends, a good mistress for my family, an agreeable companion for myself during life's gay or gloomy hours—I desired——Albert, it is not easy by words to express what I desired——what I sought——what I wanted——Albert, I wanted life! Life to press to my heart—I sought, I longed after a being, one with me in all things; in whose bosom I could open my

whole soul, my feelings, my thoughts, my joys, my sorrows, and who would return them enlightened to me—for my whole former life appeared to me like a dream.

“I made my first acquaintance with life on the battle-field; afterwards I washed the blood from my sword, and lived according to the peaceful manner of our days. The genius of life from the years of my childhood stood serious and severe before my eyes; I had never seen his smile; I forgot myself how to smile, and became, from year to year, colder, darker, and severer.

“I desired to live for my native land with my pen, or with my sword; she was my early idol, and will remain so to my last hour. But my idol is no heathenish image; it is no exterior strength and grandeur which I worship; what I love in my nation is her individual life, her noble personality; it is for the free development of her individual form in all its members, for her moral truth and beauty, that I will live, and, according to my ability, labour. Wonderful enough, that with this image in my heart, solitary amid the old hall of my ancestors, I felt my heart and hand grow cold, life becoming darker, myself more reserved and retired. A gayer, a more happy temper than mine had not felt thus; but brought up amongst scenes of blood, early wounded in my tenderest soul, serious by nature, I found within myself a striving power, but no living, revivifying spring; and alone, separated from the world and my fellows, I felt myself gradually petrifying. My brother's misfortune had scared me from love and its consequences; but I felt a deep, an earnest want of a female friend, of a mild and bright being who should halve life with me, partake in my interests, and give my life the clearness and warmth it wanted. It was another, a nobler self I sought; but, nevertheless, always another *self*—home and freedom were to be my wife's idols, as they were mine; we should kneel before the same altar.

“I had become acquainted with Countess Augusta while her husband yet lived. Her conversation pleased me; I found high cultivation in her; knowledge and interest in all the objects which were important and dear to me. It was with a lively interest, with a question from my soul to hers, that after she became a widow I approached her again. Even yet I had pleasure in her company; however, less than be-

fore; I wanted something in her, I did not well know what before I learned to know Adelaide. I saw her for the first time as Galatea; and when Pygmalion's love had imbued the fair creation with life, then I wished to be Pygmalion,—then the desire rose in my soul to be the first sigh of that young breast, to make of this enchanting being my world, my country, my paradise! See, Albert! I never felt my heart warm at Augusta's side, nor my soul expand, and become better and clearer; I spoke to her willingly, because she understood my words, and answered them; near Adelaide, I am happy; she continually strikes chords in my soul—chords which I knew not existed there, which sound sweetly to the touch, which make me feel a yet inexperienced harmony in all my existence. I am well when I am near Adelaide; I feel myself younger and stronger; life has a beauty and a power of enchantment which I never felt it to have before! I love all that is good; I feel myself mild where I never was so before—I am better; life is richer since I knew Adelaide: and nevertheless explain me this; Adelaide does not answer to the ideal I had formed myself of my wife. She is a sportive grace, who does not yet understand the importance of life. She has lightnings of a high and sublime life, but they are only lightnings. I should have difficulty in telling you what she is; I do not yet rightly know myself; only this I know, that near her I feel myself fully and purely man; that all constraint, all weight, flies from the circle in which she moves; that life there is clear and light. An enchanting life beams towards me from all her beautiful existence, and I burn with the desire to clasp it to my breast; but in the moment I stretch out my hand to seize that of the enchantress, in the same moment I retreat trembling; I cannot deny that the blind guide has seized me against my will; I feel that I love without knowing why. If I think of Adelaide, I am obliged to confess that she is not, probably can never become, the friend I sought; that was a higher, a more powerful being: Adelaide is womanhood rather in its weakness than in its real beauty. And this child—this child, weak, unreasonable, domineering, has everything which could make a certain man mad, provided he could not succeed in making her wise, and on this it depends. If Adelaide can love, sincerely love a worthy object, she will become all that

week is not enough! The potatoes are treated as if they were to rain down from heaven;—but it is no wonder that Madame* Oberg's pigs are so fat! The rolls are brought from town! It is a shame not to bake at a parsonage! In the dairy three milk-pans are standing without cream. My brother! my dear brother! you are cruelly robbed and cheated!—I had myself remarked that lately the hens had eaten more corn than was *henlike*, and Madame Oberg's pigs were continually lying in my way before the steps. 'But,' said my sister, 'why do you not live as becomes a minister and pastor of the church? Why are you not married? Did not our Lord see that it was not good for Adam—who certainly, however, had small household cares—to be alone; and did He not say: I will give him a help-meet, to whom he may cleave.'—'Who shall cleave to him, it is written,' interrupted I. 'Women should never meddle with quotations, for they always quote wrong.'

"'Ay, it is just one and the same thing,' answered my sister; 'and when our Lord said that he would give Adam a help-meet, He clearly showed thereby that a man cannot help himself without a wife. My counsel is therefore, dear brother, that unless you presently desire to be starved to death, that you as soon as possible look after a wife. What do you think of the Dowager Prostinna† Nyberg? A well-educated person, an experienced housekeeper, who will take care, I promise you, that the sugar-box will not be emptied in eight days, and that a pound of coffee will last fourteen.'

"'Will not the coffee be very weak, and very little sweetened during so long a lifetime?' asked I, in a little alarm.

"'Not at all! Strong and sweet, as much as you please; there lies the true art of the *house-mother*, that everything is good, and everything lasts. Besides you are acquainted with the widow Nyberg, and liked her very well while her late husband lived?'—'Well, very well! Hum! I could try at all events!' and I set out from my parsonage to seek me a wife.

* Madame is the title of married women of the lowest class.—M. H.

† Prostinna, an honorary title in the church. In Sweden, as in Germany, women always bear the official titles of their husbands with a feminine termination.—M. H.

“ With a strong interest I approached the widow Prostinna Nyberg, and with a question from my soul to hers. I heard her even now with pleasure, though not so much as before; for if she spoke ever so charmingly of rents, and cowhouses, and bees, and the like, I forgot to listen to her, while I lent an ear to her niece, who sat at the harpsichord and sung, ‘How blest is he, who in his lowly cot,’ etc. etc. See, Alarik! never near the aunt did I feel my heart grow warm, I never felt my soul enlarge as it were, through her; on the contrary, beside little Nora—Oh! there I felt myself happy! There I experienced a sort of music within me, which I had never before heard, and which I did not know had any existence. How hateful now did I think Madame Oberg and her pigs!—and my parsonage—how doubly dear would it become to me, if little Nora should there become Prostinna! I very well knew that I was in love, but was so perfectly so that I never for one moment suspected myself of any kind of blindness. I stretched out my hand, and said, ‘O dearest! wilt thou have me?’ She stretched out her hand, and said, ‘Very willingly, if thou wilt have me!’ The hands met, and we had a wedding! I have now in little Nora enjoyed for seven blessed years all that is estimable and good in a wife, all that makes a man satisfied and happy. In consequence, I have good reason to believe that true love is *clair-voyant*, and conducts the reasonable person who piously permits himself to be led by him, on the right road to happiness—

“ So much as a married man.

“ That I may be he who celebrates your marriage, I demand as a clergyman. I would willingly travel a hundred miles to speak the blessing of heaven on you and your bride. —I know your Adelaide. I have seen her when she visited a relation of mine, who had been her drawing-master. He was old and sick, and was with his wife in poor circumstances. She came and gave them to understand that she required divers little pictures for souvenirs, brooches, bracelets, and such like. She showed herself so enchanted with the little trifles of the old man’s manufacture, that the happy being thought himself at least a Raphael in miniature, and with a good conscience accepted the exorbitant price which

she offered him with a tone as if she feared it were too little. I shall never forget the expression of life, seriousness, and goodness in that celestial countenance, as well as the simplicity of her manners and actions.

“Once a month I receive a letter from my friend, the pastor of the parish in which the President’s estate lies; half the letter is often taken up with Miss Adelaide, and of anecdotes of the kindness and prudence she displays in her compassion for the necessities of the country people. That this angel as soon as possible may become your wife, I desire and counsel with all my heart, as your friend,

“ALBERT P.

“P.S.—Let not the somewhat coarsely joking tone of a part of my letter offend you, Alarik. Between us, let me say, that as regards the counsel one gives to a lover in the question: ‘Shall I marry, or shall I let alone?’—they are words spoken in the air. And now I see, thank God, no necessity even to speak against the wind.”

ALARIK W. TO ALBERT P.

“It is over, my friend! and your advice can now no longer avail. Adelaide may be ever so good, so charming; she is but a weak and frivolous being, devoted to pleasure, gaiety and flattery, and setting aside everything for them. She would never make me happy, and I was a fool ever to have thought I had any influence over her. Augusta warned me—Augusta was right.

“After a number of evenings, in which she had constantly been at parties, I asked her for my sake to remain one evening at home. I wanted to read something to her—I wanted to speak to her—in a word, I asked her to remain at home. She promised me unconstrainedly and frankly. In the evening when I came—she was gone.

“I had reason to believe I was not altogether indifferent to her—she gave her promise so freely, so heartily, so gladly—and she broke it to dance with Otto in a masked quadrille at Lord W.’s!

“This is not the woman for me, and I need only be wroth with myself for feeling so much pain in losing her.

“I shall soon leave this place, to resume my former solitary

life. This madness was sweet;—farewell to this transient dream! It was well that I was warned in time. I shall never again forsake the sober but secure paths of wisdom.

“A. W.”

CHAPTER X.

THE WAYS OF WISDOM.

And they kissed! and they kissed!

Children's Song.

But how it came to pass, God alone knows.

Eric xiv.—Runa.

THE President, who must have suspected some scheme as regarded Edla, thought proper, in a little private discourse with me, to command me in a very flattering manner, and at the same time to refresh me with a renewed dose of the late *Presidentska's* thoughts and principles. I had now gained a little courage from a nearer acquaintance with the family, and ventured one or two little remarks on the authoritative assertions of the President—a doubt or two. The President became somewhat astonished, I was somewhat firmer; the President became a little offended, I became a little warm; the President became a little haughty, I became a little angry; and finally, we became equally roused and heated.

“I have seen something of the world, Mamselle Rönquist,” said the President, “my late wife was educated in circles which certainly did not want——”

Here the President was interrupted by a servant who gave him a letter. He read it, and said:

“An invitation to-morrow to dinner; my brother-in-law wishes to see us all. Say to the messenger—that I shall answer immediately.” He continued to glance over the letter, and mumbled between his teeth: “The band which we desire to tie closer—your angel of a daughter—hum! worth a kingdom—hum, hum! Otto's boundless love—hum—dower—already! this important union soon concluded. Well! very well!” said the President much enchanted, forgot his circles, as well as what they did not want, and began in exchange to engage me for the marriage country-dance. I felt not the least inclination to dance, and the President, who perhaps remarked it, took my hand, shook it warmly, and said: “We are good friends, are we not, *bonne amie* Rönquist

—and I hope, ere long, shall understand each other perfectly”
—and he went out to answer his letter.

I did not entertain the same good hopes as the President, and left him in no pleasant humour to go to the drawing-room. The President, I assure you, was not so easy to deal with in questions in which one differed from him in opinion. He was quite too despotic in his will to be just.

I found Adelaide, who sat by the evening lamp, looking pale, and leaning her forehead upon her hand. When any one entered the room she blushed; she started at the least noise. Edla was in her own chamber. In the next room, the children were cooking in the stove a cream of dried bilberries, with which they promised to treat me, and from which I would gladly have been excused.

“I wonder,” said I, “if we shall see Count Alarik this evening? I think he begins to wish to make himself scarce. Countess Augusta, also, has not been seen for several days.”

“He will certainly not come,” said Adelaide, with a tear in her eye. “He is angry with me, and he has reason to be so. It is now four days since he has been here. Ah! that unlucky evening when Aunt Ulla was last here!”

“And why unlucky, my dear Adelaide?”

“How can you ask, Emma! I had promised Count Alarik to be at home that evening, and Aunt Ulla forced me to go out with her—and he did not find me at home when he came to see me—it was so wrong towards him!”

“It was wrong after you promised to be at home. But why should you give a promise when you knew you could not possibly keep it?”

“I thought everything possible when he desired it. I asked Aunt Ulla to tell them that I was ill.”

“But the masked quadrille could not then have taken place—and, besides, they would have soon found out the secret of your sickness; you had promised to come, and the quadrille chiefly depended on you—you could not avoid it.”

“That unhappy Otto! It is all his fault. He had arranged the whole matter—I was so impatient to come home, that I forced Aunt Ulla to let me go immediately after the quadrille was ended. But when I came home—he had already been here—and was gone.”

“If he comes one of these days you can tell him the whole affair, and excuse yourself.”

“Yes, *if* he comes!—*Du reste*, he can think, and come, and go as he pleases—it is no matter of mine.”

I gave no answer to this sudden burst of indifference, and after a moment's silence Adelaide resumed—“If I loved a person, I could never be angry with that person. If he had crossed me ever so much, I would not wait until the sun went down to reconcile myself with him; I would not let an hour go round.”

I did not answer; and after we had sat silent about a quarter of an hour, Adelaide said again:

“Tell me, Emma—for you have lived much longer than I—tell me, are there many sorrowful moments in life,—many when the heart is really oppressed, when one would wish to die?”

“There are such.”

“Many?”

“O yes! particularly when one is not pious and gentle in temper.”

“Then I will pray to God that He will let me soon die, for I will not have such moments,” said Adelaide energetically; “my sweet Emma, I will not be unhappy!” added she, weeping.

“Will not! My sweet Adelaide, it is not right to say so.”

“Is it not? Forgive me!” and she wiped her eyes.

“And if you are not happy yourself, can you make the happiness of others? You are your father's, you are my best happiness here on earth, Adelaide; will you not live for our sakes?”

“I will!” said Adelaide; and kissing my cheek she wet it with a tear.

“But if you are sorrowful, if you are unhappy, I cannot have any enjoyment.”

“I will not be sorrowful; I shall accustom myself not to be so happy—I shall teach myself—none shall suffer on my account!”

“And if the burden should feel too heavy?”

“He who laid it on,” said Adelaide, stifling a sigh, “will take it away, or help me to bear it.”

She got up, went to the piano, and sought, as always when

her soul was moved, for comfort and outpouring in song. Never had she sung more beautifully than this evening; there lay a seriousness and a quiet melancholy in her voice, which rendered it inexpressibly touching. Her spirit gradually rose as she sung; and with living life and true inspiration she executed the splendid airs of the Creation, and seemed to forget all the heavy realities of life in picturing the beautiful, the youthful world, which once at the "BE!" of the Maker stood forth free from sin and pain. Adelaide's song came from a full soul, and therefore called irresistibly forth a mass of feelings and thoughts in the breast of her hearers. She touched this evening the utmost chords of the soul: I forgot that the President's tea-time drew near; I forgot that the lamp was going out; I gave myself up with enthusiasm to the bright visions which Adelaide's tones brought before my mind. I thought on "the happy days, when the dews of the morning lay yet upon life;" I thought of the lovely singer with indescribable tenderness and anxiety, on the life, on the fate, that might be destined her. While I thus allowed myself to be conducted by Adelaide into the rich world of memory and futurity, I heard gentle footsteps approach, but so softly, that they seemed to fear being heard. I thought that it was the President (who was feelingly alive to music), but when I looked up, my eyes rested on Count Alarik's more than usually severe and pale countenance. He made a sign to me to be quiet, and seated himself in the corner of the couch, not far from me. Adelaide, who sat with her back turned, observed nothing, but continued to sing. I screwed up the lamp, and cast a side glance unremarked on Count Alarik. It was not long ere I saw the severity melt from his fine countenance, and give place to an expression of unspeakable tenderness, and now—I remembered the President's tea, and went out to look after it.

In the drawing-room on the other side of the *salle* I found the President walking up and down with hasty steps and disturbed countenance. While I arranged the fire, and tormented the scattered brands, he said:

"Is Count A. already gone?"

"No, not yet!" I answered.

"He is going!" said the President; "it is d——d!—Something must have offended him, he must be displeased

with something. I cannot conceive what has happened. He came to take leave of me, and left his compliments for the ladies—but I sent him in. Augusta is here, is she not?"

"No! but perhaps she is coming."

"It is some misunderstanding, some jealousy, some such nonsense. Augusta is not prudent and attentive enough. I am convinced that he is desperately in love with her, and she could never find a better husband; birth, situation, disposition, everything is suitable. If I could know whence this misunderstanding has so suddenly come! I must have light in the affair."

"Perhaps," said I, "Count Alarik is inconstant, or perhaps he really does not love Countess Augusta."

"Not! Trust me, Mamselle Rönquist, that he does. On such matters I am not to be deceived. I have lived a little too much in the world and with people to be mistaken on such a matter, which besides is so obvious. Alarik is in love with Augusta, and she does not hate him, that is certain. And she suits him as well as Otto suits Adelaide."

In this moment, little active feet were heard running through the hall, and the children bounced into the room, with open mouths, and eyes standing out of their heads with wonder and surprise. They ran quite breathless up to me, relating with a hurry and disorder which cannot be described, something which it was impossible to clearly understand, but certain names which they repeated, and the ever-returning chorus of, "and he kissed, and she kissed, and they kissed!" made the President knit his brow, and me smile.

"Go in, Mamselle Rönquist! go in, for God's sake, best *bonne amie!*" exclaimed the President, who seemed at this moment to have got light in the affair—"go and see what it is. This would be to me a most unfortunate circumstance! Count Alarik is not a man to say 'No' to; and he is not rich, and not suitable for Adelaide. Go in, for heaven's sake! I will follow immediately. I must first send off my letters."

I went very slowly, with the children as my *avant-couriers*, whom I persuaded to go and dish the hard-boiled cream, with which I was longing to treat myself.

The minute I entered the drawing-room, I found that all was said between Alarik and Adelaide. Love and joy

streamed from their eyes, so that the room seemed to be made bright by them. Adelaide ran and cast her arms round my neck: "I shall be happy, so happy!" she whispered; Count Alarik took my hand, and—in this minute Countess Augusta entered. She cast upon us a singular, searching glance, and grew pale; her voice trembled when she asked after her father. He came in almost at the same time, as well as Edla, and we sat down to tea in a very absent and constrained state of mind. The two happy lovers meanwhile seemed but to have one mutual thought and feeling.

An enchantment lay over Adelaide which seemed to have altogether divided her from the present; it reminded me of the ambrosial cloud, with which the gods of other days used to envelop their earthly favourites. She drew herself back in the shadow, to hide there her glowing cheeks, her excess of happiness. Count Alarik was beautiful to look at, something so majestically clear lay over his noble forehead; one saw that with the fulness of his powers he bore a blessed world within his bosom. Why did his kindling glance seek the shadow, as if his light was there?

The President spoke of the cholera, and of the probability that it would soon come to Sweden.

"Very, very beautiful weather!" answered Count Alarik.

"My father," said Countess Augusta, "is not speaking of the weather; he speaks of the cholera, and of the probability that it will soon come to us."

"Aha, is she coming?" answered the Count, more absent than before.

The President spoke of the ravages of the wolves in the country, and the necessity of taking steps and measures against them.

Count Alarik answered something about the fortifications of Marstrand.

The President looked surprised. Countess Augusta asked somewhat sharply where Count Alarik's thoughts were this evening? I was not a little glad when the little ones came with their bilberry cream, and caused a healthy diversion in the conversation. I was the first who ventured to taste the dish, and encouraged all to follow my example.

My heart became warm, when I heard Count Alarik ask the President at what hour of the forenoon of the following

day he was "at home?" and the President, half discontented, half embarrassed, speak of "affairs, disposed-of time—invitation to dinner, etc." Count Alarik persisted in begging for an hour in the morning, and the President in not finding one at his disposal. At length Count Alarik, in all seriousness, actually proposed to visit the President in his bed at five o'clock in the morning, or else to have the audience immediately; when the latter in alarm for his morning slumbers, and seeing that he could not avoid it, agreed, though very ungraciously, to be at home for Count Alarik at twelve o'clock on the following day.

"Well!" said the President, as he took me aside as soon as the company had separated—"well, what has happened now?"

"Ay, that is just what I myself have an infinite desire to know," answered I. "Countess Augusta came into the room nearly at the same time with me, and I could not get an account of anything."

The President looked very much dissatisfied. "It is a most distressing affair," said he. "My brother-in-law has almost my promise of Adelaide for Otto. But I shall say so to Count Alarik—I shall tell him frankly that Adelaide is not a suitable wife for him."

"Hear first her own opinion on the matter," said I imploringly.

"A most fatal affair!" were the President's last words; "most fatal! and which, with proper attention from the right quarter, could never have gone so far."

That the President meant *me* by the "right quarter" I understood well enough; and, independent of my sharp-sightedness, might have known it in the glance which was cast at me. But all this troubled me very little—Adelaide would be happy. When alone with Adelaide in her room, I sought to learn what had taken place, and how the proposed farewell-visit had taken such a turn; but out of all that which Adelaide, through her smiles, tears, and affectionate caresses, told me, the most sagacious could not have become very knowing. It seemed as if Count Alarik had got the conceit of acting Pygmalion—that he had questioningly laid his hand on the heart of his beloved, but mistaken himself, and instead of "Galatea!" called "Adelaide!" The sum total of the

event seemed to be contained in the little children's clear account—"And they kissed! and they kissed!"—"but how it came to pass, heaven alone knows."

CHAPTER XI.

AMUSEMENTS.

Now came another sort of life,
Splendid parties every night.

MADAME LENNGREN.

It was twelve o'clock, it was one o'clock, it was two o'clock the following day, and Adelaide and I were yet in the most painful expectation and uncertainty. We heard footsteps, we heard voices, in the President's room; that we did not listen to what was said, was in such a moment a very great virtue. At three o'clock the President came out to the dinner-table; no Count Alarik was visible. The President was affected; he often looked at Adelaide, and the tears came into his eyes. He ate with divided attention—uncommonly rare with him—and hardly spoke at all. Immediately after coffee, he called Adelaide into his room.

After a little preface, he imparted Count Alarik's offer to her; spoke of the plans he himself (the President) had had for her; showed her the difference of her position as the wife of the rich Otto, in the most brilliant circles of the court and the capital, and as the wife of Count Alarik, who was not rich, on a lonely estate in a distant province. He exaggerated the contrasts, probably to try, perhaps even to gain, Adelaide; but left her in all things free to choose. Adelaide's choice was made long ago. She opened her heart to her father. The President's tender and fatherly heart showed itself now unrestrained. He told her that her love did her honour; that Count Alarik had even gained his heart; that he was proud of being able to call him son; that he had certainly wished him for another of his daughters; but that if his most beloved child should be happy with Count Alarik, he would see God's will in that matter. He then gave to Adelaide a little exhortation for the future; represented to her the weight and the importance of the duties she was going to take on herself; which it became so much the more important for her to deliberately consider, as this

engagement would divide her in future from her family and nearest relations. He warned her of a love for vanity and dissipation, which might prove dangerous enemies to her own and her husband's peace. The President had not chosen to give the Count a decided answer before he had spoken to his daughter, and before he had informed his brother-in-law's family; and of what was proposed, this last, though with a heavy heart, he would himself on the following day perform.

Adelaide came from her father deeply moved, and more serious than I had yet seen her. Before an hour was over, however, all this gravity had given place to the brightest and sincerest joy. Now and then she sighed, and said: "Poor Otto!"

Yes; poor Otto! He was truly to be pitied. There was a great commotion in his Excellency G.'s family. His Excellency, a wise man of the world, found it best to make as little noise as possible about the refusal which he conceived the family had received. However, it is possible that, notwithstanding, a real separation would have taken place between the two families, had it not been for Adelaide herself. She spoke so kindly to her uncle and aunt; she showed them so much tenderness, so much gratitude, that they, through love of her, forgot all anger. The Baroness, who loved Adelaide as a mother, only entreated that now and then, as before, she might accompany her into the world. "I shall otherwise become too suddenly poor!" said she, with tears in her eyes. Adelaide promised all that could console her. With Otto it was worse. He was desperate, broke tables and chairs, and it required an exertion of all the love he really did bear to Adelaide to prevent him from calling out Count Alarik as his rival. Adelaide used all the influence she had over him to make him calmer; she spoke tenderly, she spoke reasonably with him, she promised to love him always as a sister—all in vain! Otto sent the sister to the devil, and wept over his lost bride. It was wonderful enough that Countess Augusta succeeded better than any one else in consoling him. She had many and long conversations with him, and he gradually became calmer. On Count Alarik he always cast the bitterest glances. The Count again, who pitied his unfortunate rival with all his

heart, was friendly towards him, and gradually gained the goodwill of his Excellency, and more particularly of his lady.—Countess Augusta comforted herself to perfection, and I really came to doubt if she had ever loved the Count, which I had sometimes believed. She made a glory of being his friend and sister; she said she was happy in Adelaide's happiness. I now only marvelled at the emotion she had shown on the day that "they kissed!"—On the evening of the day on which the President had spoken to Adelaide, he said to me:

"Count Alarik has really stolen my heart from me to-day. A proud, a noble man, Mamselle Rönquist! And poor is he not either. He showed us clearly how his fortune stands. Well, rich he certainly is not—far from it! But perhaps it is no misfortune for Adelaide—riches expose to so many temptations! I believe that he will make my Adelaide happy. And she loves him, Mamselle Rönquist! Alas! how people can deceive themselves! That Adelaide should be so far separated from me, will grieve me much—but when her happiness is in question, then——" The President wiped his eyes.—I wish that my reader could have seen Adelaide on the day of her betrothal!* I had done myself the pleasure of trimming her white silk gown with swansdown round the skirt, round the neck, and the short sleeves; it was scarcely whiter than her skin. Some fresh roses, which Count Alarik had given her, and which met her first wakening glance in the morning, a handsome necklace also his gift, were Adelaide's only ornaments. She was dazzlingly beautiful and enchanting; there was but *one* voice on that head. Count Alarik, to use a more expressive than beautiful manner of speaking, devoured her with his eyes. A mild but bright seriousness was this day spread over Adelaide's countenance and whole appearance. Her glance was pious and calm. She felt her happiness with sincere gratitude. "Ought I not to be happy?" she said to her betrothed. "Has not life become for me a garden of roses!"

He pressed her to his breast, called her his beautiful swan,

* A formal betrothal is customary in Sweden, and announces an engagement to the friends of the family and the world in general. Rings are exchanged on the occasion. The bride on her marriage-day receives another, so that married women always wear two.—M. H.

his life's flower, his joy! The philosopher had wholly disappeared in the lover.

His Excellency G. and the Baroness were among the guests; the former maintained a calm countenance, but the Baroness's eyes occasionally filled with tears. Otto was invisible. In the evening, when Adelaide was going to the kitchen to cast an eye on the preparation for supper, she was stopped in the lobby by a tall figure wrapped in a cloak; she was first frightened, but soon recognised Otto.

"I was determined to see you to-day, Adelaide," said he, "but could not come with the rest. See how thin I have grown, Cousin Adelaide! My clothes are hanging upon me——"

"Poor Otto! my good Otto!" said Adelaide, with unaffected compassion.

"Yes! poor Otto you really care little about. He might willingly lay himself down in the cold grave for you—you would dance as gaily."

"Otto!" said Adelaide, reproachingly, "how can you speak so? Why will you vex me? It is not good of you, Otto."

"How beautiful you are!" said Otto, contemplating her with admiration and clasped hands; "how enchanting you are! How beautiful this swansdown is! How heavenly you are! Are you very happy, Adelaide?"

"Yes, dear Otto! I must go now; do not detain me longer, good, dear Otto! Adieu!"

"God bless you, Adelaide!" said Otto with a stifled voice, falling on his knees to kiss the swansdown which bordered her dress. "God bless you, my Adelaide!"

"Whose Adelaide?" asked a voice, which made Adelaide start. It was Count Alarik who stood beside her.

"Thine!" said she, as she laid her arm round his neck. "Good night, good Otto, farewell!"

Otto sprang distractedly down stairs. Count Alarik was not pleased. He expressed his contempt of Otto, and discontent that Adelaide had stood in the passage to catch cold. The servants might have been at hand, and heard what was said, etc., etc. He grumbled already quite married-man-like, the sinner!

“Do not be so severe!” begged Adelaide tenderly. “You are happy, Otto is unhappy!”

“Then he ought to bear it like a man; he behaves pitifully——”

“Otto is good; he is better than you——”

“Really!”

“He is not so severe towards others—not so prejudiced——”

“Really!”

“You are not—very good, you——”

“Really!”

“But good or not, I love no one else in the world but you!” Kisses and peace.

From that day there commenced a string of ceaseless parties for the affianced couple. The whole world wanted to see, the whole world wanted to have them. Adelaide was presented at court, according to the President's desire. The King distinguished Count Alarik by the most honourable marks of his esteem. To be engaged to a man so remarkable for his bravery, talents, and most distinguished person, gave a new brilliancy to Adelaide's life. Her beauty seemed to grow higher and more dazzling; she was everywhere the fairest of the fair, the most sought-after, caressed, flattered, idolized, and surrounded, so that Count Alarik had often difficulty in approaching her. This, in addition to Otto's continual hanging behind her chair in company where they met, made Count Alarik dissatisfied with this mode of life. He made representations; he desired that they might remain at home; he wished that the endless invitations might in some way be refused: but Adelaide, excited by dancing, flattery, and youthful life, gave herself enthusiastically up to pleasure, and would not for a moment listen to any remonstrance.

I also began now to speak to her, to beg her to be more at home, to oblige her betrothed.

“Let me dance, let me play,” said Adelaide, a little impatiently; “I am yet so young I may well be allowed to have some pleasures. My sweet Emma, be good towards your Adelaide; be glad that I enjoy myself! This is my last dancing-winter; afterwards I will sit and bake and brew in

the country—everything has its own time, good Emma; the dance ought not to be interdicted to me now. Is it not so?" cried she, running towards her betrothed, who now entered: "I may amuse myself, may dance, may be gay, may have my own way in everything, and no one may say a cross word to me, but all must love me, and do all that I wish?" and her countenance beamed with gaiety and sportiveness.

"And spoil you, Adelaide?" said Count Alarik, as he kissed her forehead.

"Not spoil me!—I cannot be spoiled!"

"You are so already, Adelaide," said Count Alarik smiling, but seriously.

"Really!—You find fault with me?"

"Yes!"

"You will love me with my faults—yes, you will like them for my sake!"

"I cannot, Adelaide."

"You will not!"

"I cannot! I cannot love a giddy and thoughtless woman!"

"Really! and I cannot love a cross-grained and grumbling man."

"Adelaide!"

"Alarik! Listen, my beloved Alarik, I shall do what you please, I shall become what you please. I will lay aside all my faults. But now be a little kind towards me! Let me during this short time amuse myself."

"Amuse yourself, Adelaide," said he. "But I am tired of these so-called amusements, these eternal, empty parties. I will remain at home. You can go alone."

"No! now you are hard! My beloved, my good Alarik, hear me! Accompany me only a few days. Let me see, one, two, three, four—only four days; after that I promise you to stay at home fourteen if you please. For my sake come, my Alarik. Without you I can have no enjoyment! Will you not come for your Adelaide's sake?"

The Count went. The President went with his children that evening; Edla was at work alone in her room. I remained at home, for I was tired of several nights' sitting up. The children sat with me. Coach after coach rolled on the streets, the lights streamed from all the windows of the

palace. When we heard the crackling of the rising rockets, which saluted from the river the royal birthday, the children began to cry, thinking it somewhat hard that they "should sit in the dark," and not see the fine things that all the world saw.—To console them, I promised to tell them a story. They immediately wiped away their tears, opened their ears, and listened attentively to a sincere and moral account of "Homely Amusements."

CHAPTER XII.

HOMELY AMUSEMENTS.

"It tastes of game though!" said the old woman, when she boiled the hedge-stake on which the crow had been sitting.

"FAR, far away, in Klara Bergsgrend, lived I and my sister Johanna. We lived with an old aunt who had taken us home after our father's death. But she was sick and poor, and therefore could not see much after us. We were for the most part left to the charge of an old dame, who took care of us; but she was a little severe, and a little miserly, and very deaf; so that we had not very pleasant days with her. In the mean time we tried to amuse ourselves as well as we could. We had tamed a little mouse, so that when we laid a bit of sugar on the stone before the stove it would come out and eat, though we stood at the other end of the room; it is true that we scarcely dared to breathe, and were not a little flattered with its confidence. Pieces of sugar, however, in those days were scarce enough with us, and more than two little bits in the week were never expended, partly to satisfy our mouse's appetite, and partly our own. Sunday was a great holiday for us, because then we got Eau de Cologne on a corner of our pocket-handkerchiefs, butter to our potatoes at breakfast, and roast-meat to dinner!

"Another great enjoyment, which I did not choose exactly to mention to the children, but which I will not conceal from you, my reader, was that which we had, when our old aunt R., a thin widow, came in the afternoon to pay our aunt a visit. It was exceedingly amusing; first, because we always had tea with *scorpor*,* and chiefest, because she liked best to

* Small rolls cut in two and browned in the oven; the universal tea and coffee bread.—M. H.

speaking of her courtships, which put all manner of thoughts into our heads. I shall never forget the extreme curiosity and interest with which I heard her whisper to my aunt, 'Thou! the rich S—— in the bank; thou! I might have had him if I would!' But she had never chosen to marry again.

"Amongst our amusements was also leave to play twice a week for two hours in the court. But as people are seldom content with what they have, so neither were we satisfied with our present pleasures, and when the summer came, and all the world had gone to the country, we took a great fancy to have a country-place for ourselves. Sometimes we had been permitted to accompany our old dame into the cellar, and there we marked out a spot on the floor on which the daylight fell through an air-hole opening into the yard. Here one fine day in the end of May we planted a pea. During three weeks we went every day to visit the spot, as well as to poke a little in the earth, to ascertain if it did not intend to come up. Great was our joy when, on the twenty-fourth day after the planting, we perceived a little elevation in the earth, and under this peeped out our charming pea, quite green, and quite modest, with one expanded leaf. We danced round it, and sung with joy. Opposite to this plantation we now placed a little card-house, and at the door of this a little bench, on which sat ladies and gentlemen cut out of paper,—and nobody can have a more lively enjoyment from their country-seats than we had from ours.

"We lived in a little, very dark room. But from my bed, I could in the morning see a little bit of sky, and a chimney of our neighbour's house. Now, when the smoke ascended from the chimney, and was stained red and yellow by the rising sun as it curled up in the blue heaven, I thought that the world up in the air must be very beautiful, and I longed to go there. I took a great desire to fly, and told it to Johanna. We made ourselves wings of paper, and when they would not bear us upwards, we tried if at least they could not support us when we threw ourselves from the linen-press and the stove upon which we had climbed. But independent of the many bruises we got, the great clatter we made on the floor when we fell from the press brought out our old dame, who seriously scolded the clumsy angels. In the mean time

we hit on another manner to lift ourselves up, and hover over the earth. We chose out suitable stakes, which we used as crutches, and with these we galloped up and down and across the court, fancying that we were almost flying. If we, however, had only been herewith content!—but the desire of knowing more of the world plunged us into misfortune. The house in which we lived lay in a court, divided by a high wooden railing from the street. A part of the court was a garden, well shut in, and belonging to a Notary. He was a severe gentleman, and we stood much in awe of him.

“The temptation to evil this time came in the shape of a little pig. We saw, namely, one day when we had our play-hour in the court, a blessed pig which was making himself merry in the garden in the most unconscionable manner. Spinach and tulips, strawberries and parsley, he threw all round about him as he dug and grubbed in the earth. Our wrath at this was great, nor less our surprise at how the pig had been able to get into the garden when the door was locked and the railing so close. We spied about for a long time, and at last discovered that just by the pigsty there was a hole in the railing which was almost hidden by a pile of rotten planks; but which the pig had discovered, and made his way through. We thought it of the highest importance to get the pig immediately out of the garden, and found no better way of so doing, than by creeping in the same way as he had done—which it was not very difficult to do. And now with great energy we chased out our poor guide, and made all in as good order as we could where he had been rummaging. The hole in the railing we mended with a bit of wood, but could not resist the temptation of allowing it to perform the double service of a hindrance to the pig, and a door for ourselves. Seeing that we certainly should neither spoil nor touch anything in the garden, we thought there could not be much harm in sometimes taking a little fresh air in this paradise. Every Sunday, therefore, we crept through the pig’s entrance, and shut it well after us; all round the garden planks there was a thick hedge of lilac bushes, which prevented our being seen from the outside. It was very improper of us, however, to go into another person’s garden without leave, and we soon learnt by experience that all evil, sooner or later, unavoidably brings its own punishment.

“A little pleasure-house stood in the garden beside the plank railing, which divided it from the street. Some maples stood so near that Johanna and I formed the bold resolution of climbing up in these, that we might get on the roof of the summer-house, whence to see over the railing and into the street. No sooner thought than done. Proud, victorious, and happy, we saw ourselves after a quarter of an hour's labour on the roof which promised so much, and richly were we rewarded for our trouble. We had a full view into the street; now and then we saw an old woman with her milk pails; sometimes a gentleman in a gig, and when we were very fortunate, a lady with a bonnet on and a parasol! Nor was this all; we had even a distant prospect of a bit of Queen's-street, and had the inexpressible delight of catching glimpses of a crowd of foot-passengers, riders, and carriages. The whole world seemed to move itself there. After having seen it once, we could not live without seeing it many times.

“One day—I remember it as if it were yesterday—one day we had taken possession of our lofty post, and peeped curiously out to see the world in Queen's-street. Just as we were peeping we discovered a fine courier on horseback; then a pair of white horses drawing a fine carriage! It must be the queen! Perhaps the king himself! Beside ourselves with joy, we clapped our hands and began to huzza aloud. At the same moment we heard the Notary coughing in the garden. Our affright was beyond description. We wanted to hurry down from the roof to hide ourselves in the tree, but in our haste and alarm we mistook our hand and foot resting-places. Johanna rolled like a ball into the midst of the Notary's strawberry bed, and I remained hanging with my chin on a great nail projecting out of the railing, and screamed meanwhile as if I were mad. See here! the scar of the nail-head yet remains!——”

Here my story was broken off by the entrance of supper, and the children, after they had seen me well off the nail, were in haste to eat their beloved pancakes. During their meal they made all sorts of wise reflections on their own fate, compared it with that I had just talked of, and when the rockets hissed and exploded, they no longer dared to repine that they were unable even to contemplate their light.

I return to Adelaide. After yet four days' amusement, she kept her word in what she had promised Count Alarik, remained at home, was happy in consequence, and yet more happy in his satisfaction. Three days thus passed peacefully away. The fourth evening came. Count Alarik then wished to read something for us out of his favourite author Shakspeare, and we were all glad of it, particularly Countess Augusta, who generally in all things had a remarkable similarity of taste with him.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OAK AND THE VINE.

Say, dost thou ask from the rivulet which flows through the valley, and mirrors
Whatever it sees in its passing, the banks and the kine, and the people,
That it should leap up to the clouds like the rich palace fountain?
Dost thou ask from the water-fall ocean's huge billows and music?
Alone with the bill nature gave him doth sing every bird of the greenwood.

FRANZEN.

COUNT ALARIK was particularly happy that evening. Adelaide sat beside him; he read *Macbeth* aloud, and enjoyed the impression it made on her young and easily excited mind; he seemed to feel her heart beat quick at the powerful scenes, and stopped involuntarily to see her shudder and grow pale at the terrible words with which *Lady Macbeth* spirits up her husband already trembling before the crime:

Macbeth. I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

Lady Macbeth. What beast was't then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you. I have given suck; and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me;
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have plucked my nipple from its boneless gums,
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn, as you
Have done to this.

—Just in the most interesting part of the play, a carriage stopped at our door, and the entrance even of the bloody *Lady Macbeth* herself, I think, at this moment would have frightened me less than that of the *Baroness*. She came now,

and required that all the children, but particularly Adelaide, should accompany her to see Mr. Tråde's apes; and she now described their tricks and frolics in such a lively and amusing manner, that Adelaide laughed heartily, and said: "We must see these ridiculous animals. The exhibition does not last very long, does it?"

"An hour at the most," said the Baroness, "and afterwards I will bring you all home again."

"O, we must see them!" exclaimed Adelaide, without taking notice of Count Alarik's dark countenance. The President gave his consent. The children were transported with joy; even Edla was curious; they all went to dress; Countess Augusta shrugged her shoulders, and unwillingly followed her father, who begged her to come into his room to look through some papers regarding her affairs. The young ladies soon returned dressed for the exhibition. Adelaide went to her betrothed, and said: "Do not be angry, I will soon be back again!" She kissed him hurriedly, and flew off. I was left alone with the Count. He looked after Adelaide with an expression of mingled tenderness, displeasure, and anxiety. He crossed his arms, and leaning back on the sofa, exclaimed with bitterness, and as it were to himself: "Giddy, giddy!"

"Youth, youth!" answered I, excusingly, to his reproach.

"Youth," resumed Count Alarik, "need not be giddy. One can be gay without ceaselessly seeking after amusement. Though young, one can even love nobler pleasures, and have enjoyment from other than childish sports and empty diversions. To give oneself blindly up to these is not to use one's youth, it is to waste it; it is to make oneself incapable of the noblest duties of life, of its highest enjoyments; incapable of growing old with calmness and dignity."

"Not always," answered I; "it is a real necessity for certain dispositions to let the warmth of their youthful temperament have its way. I know those who from having been almost wild in the years of their youth have afterwards become as prudent and estimable as they were amiable."

"I also know people," answered the Count, "who from their wild youth have gone over to destruction in their riper years, and sunk to the lowest degree of contempt before they had reached old age."

"I will tell you why," said I, joking.

"And why?"

"Because they had no Count Alarik for their lover and their husband." Without paying much attention to my civility, he continued, with rising emotion:

"And if she made him unhappy, instead of becoming better by him; if the charming but thoughtless woman did not find him sufficient for her lively and unsteady mind; if she took a dislike to a severe mentor, and flew from him to flattering toys, and left him alone with his wisdom and his virtue;—or if she rendered him as weak as herself; if fear to lose her love made him become a partaker and an instigator of her follies; if she seduced him to gradually forget himself, his duties towards the community; if she degraded him till he was forced to despise himself, and then as a deserved reward for his weakness pitied and despised him!" Here Count Alarik rose hastily, and took some paces up and down the room. After a moment's silence he continued:

"I had a brother—an only brother; he loved a young and beautiful girl, another Adelaide——"

"Another Adelaide?" interrupted I, incredulously.

"Yes! she was as lovely and thoughtless as she is. In the three years of their marriage, through vanity and love of dissipation, she had reduced him to the wretch I have just described. Then she abandoned him, and he shot himself through the head."

"If she resembled Adelaide, it must have been his own fault that they did not become happy," said I with firmness; adding, "Adelaide is an angel of goodness, in the end she will allow herself to be led by him she esteems and loves; but he should not in all things seek to repress the ebullitions of her lively temper. Let her sometimes leave you for lighter pleasures, and she will return to you with redoubled love. Be tender; be sometimes forbearing with her, and you will be able to lead her as you please."

"A being so beautiful, so flighty, so anxious to please, is difficult to lead even with both tenderness and seriousness. Could Adelaide only think——"

"That she can!" said I; "she makes no speeches, she does not moralize, but does she not often during conversation throw out words so striking, so full of feeling and

thought, words which give instant light to the question on which others had been groping."

"Yes, she has gleams of real genius, but this is precisely the most dangerous of her gifts; such flashes of genius in a woman like Adelaide more often serve to dazzle than to direct. If Adelaide could think of life; if she could see its importance, its deep and heavenly truths—nay, if she could only form a principle and act upon it; if I only saw the possibility of her doing so with time, I would be more tranquil. But this lies altogether out of Adelaide's character and disposition. She is not capable of an argument, she follows the inspirations of every moment; she has no stability in herself. She is weak; she is more, she is feeble; her desire to satisfy all, and still more a certain levity in her, make her a shuttlecock for every one's pleasure, now good and now evil. Goodness is heavenly, but levity and weakness are not goodness."

I was offended. "It must be very pleasant," I said, "to paint a Medusa's head, and put it upon one's mistress's shoulders—a very service of love, which deserves thanks. My beautiful, sweet Adelaide! He who not long ago called you his life's flower, to-day sees in you but a weak and pitiful creature!"

Count Alarik smiled, as if conscious of both his own and my exaggeration, but said again with a sorrowful seriousness:

"Have you not heard fair but rootless flowers spoken of, which lie on the surface of the waters, and drive a sport for every wave——"

"Count, you are positively unjust towards Adelaide!" I exclaimed with energy. "You do not yet know her in reality. She can have her own purpose, and can when she pleases make it effectually observed. A proof of it, which I will produce, will probably seem insignificant to you; but for me it is otherwise. She can, for instance, make herself better obeyed by the servants in this house than the President himself, and is almost as much feared as she is loved by them."

"Is it so?" asked Count Alarik with singular satisfaction.

"Yes; for weak as she is, she can scold, and is never more loveable than then: there is at the same time a seriousness

and propriety in her words, which always strike the mind of the person who has been to blame, if he be not altogether incorrigible. And what do you wish, Count, to make of Adelaide? Is she not the loveliest creature in nature? Is she not goodness itself, love itself, the life and joy of every place where she is? Does she not seem to be born in this world to sweeten and reconcile all? And her beauty and her talents seem only valued by her, for the pleasure they give to others. Do you know, Count, that I have seen her in a poor sick girl's humble room—this girl loved music even to passion—sing with the same pains and perfection as in winter at the most brilliant festivities where the royal family have been present. This kind of desire to please is, I think, very pardonable." I had spoken with earnestness and warmth, for I found him so unjust towards Adelaide.

"Yes!" said he finally, softened, "she is good, and goodness is a beautiful quality—but——"

I interrupted him, and pointing to a page of Wilhelm Meister's *Lehrjahre*, which lay open on the table, read aloud the following sentence:

"Humanity is composed merely of individuals, the world of individual powers united. Every single disposition is of importance, and must be developed, not in one, but in many. If one promotes the beautiful, another the useful, these two united make a rational being."

I now continued for myself: "Why should we require of the vine that it should stand firm and bid defiance to the storms like the oak? Let us give to the vine the oak for support, and she, winding herself round the firm stem, making but one with it, shall resist the storms, and bring forth the fairest fruit. O, how many highly-gifted beings, how many Adelaides, would have been saved from the world's temptations, if they had early received a noble and firm support!"

"But if the support should fall? If, after Adelaide had become my wife, I should die, or be forced to leave her for a length of time?"

"The vine has a support besides the oak," said I.

"And that is?"

"The sun, which can develop the life of the plant, even had it already sunk to the earth."

"Let us leave comparisons: they express only half a thought," said he; "what do you mean?"

"Adelaide is religious," returned I.

"Adelaide is only seventeen," said he.

"What mean you by that?" I inquired.

"That religious feelings belong to her years, and that the warm blood of youth swells the heart for that heaven which religious instruction has just disclosed to her. But let this swell lay itself—or let the enjoyments of the world and the senses put it to the test, and we shall soon see how heaven would be forgotten for earthly enjoyments, how empty and poor that life will be which has not grounded itself in the powerful element of extensive and well-ordered thought."

I was painfully excited. "Should we then," said I, "refuse to believe on all virtue which is not grounded on deeply considered principles, on philosophic views of life and things? O Count Alarik! then we must despair of two-thirds of the world; and particularly of the female sex! No! let me believe, and you yourself must have experienced it, that a good person has in his feelings, once directed and enlightened by the truths of our religion, an unfailing guide. The unlearned but pious woman can be conducted to a holy heaven by her genius, as securely as the greatest philosopher by his."

"It is not learning I require," said Count Alarik, "it is sound sense."

"It is not sound sense which Adelaide is in want of," said I; "it is a few more years, but they will come."

Count Alarik shook his head: "Giddy, giddy!" said he again. I had now become a little tired of this theme.

"Yes!" said I, sighing, "certainly Adelaide is very giddy!"

He looked at me. "But she is good," said he, "good as an angel; with tenderness and seriousness she can be taught to acquire what she is now in want of."

"Yes, she is certainly good," said I, "but you are right—certainly, she is very weak—very feeble of purpose!"

"She is so young yet. Her soul can be strengthened."

"That is quite out of her nature. God knows she is made to serve as a shuttlecock at every one's pleasure. She is a rootless flower, driving at the mercy of every current."

"She shall take root in my breast!" said Count Alarik,

with warm conviction. "I shall support her; I shall love her, and keep her firm!"

"Ay? of that she will soon weary. She is not of a humour to like a moralising mentor. She will soon leave you alone with your wisdom——"

"That cannot be," exclaimed he with warmth, and reddening; "you mistake——" but speedily recollecting himself, and looking at me, who could now no longer restrain my tears, he took my hand kindly, pressed it, and continued:

"I see that you will be revenged, and you are right in loving her. Love her, love her much," he continued, with warmth and emotion; "it may be required. I am too severe. Frightened by my brother's fate, I have become doubtful and suspicious, perhaps too grave for such a being as Adelaide. She does not love what is serious——"

"Yes!" said I, "she shows it; she is very unwillingly with you; she even avoids you!"

He smiled, but became immediately grave again, and said: "Why did she go away just now, now when I wished to pass the evening with her, and share with her my favourite amusement—and leave it for the sake of some monkeys?——"

"That story," said I, casting a glance upon Macbeth, "is too serious for a girl of seventeen, and besides, the exhibition of apes is something quite new for Adelaide. Well! but have you not remarked how much more attention Adelaide has given to matters of a higher interest of late, especially when you speak of them?"

"I have not remarked it," said Count Alarik, evidently pleased, nevertheless, at my greater perspicacity.

"I love her deeply," continued he, with strong emotion, "yes, even to idolatry, in spite of all her faults. But it is this very feeling which frightens me. The fear of not being enough for Adelaide, nay! of perhaps not being the right husband for her; the fear that she should gain too great an influence over me and misuse it, makes me often think——that it were best——" he hesitated, and added almost inaudible, "that I should part from her before it is too late."

"Part from Adelaide!" cried I, "O, how far from tender a man's love can be! how egotistical are these philosophers!"

"I could die for her," said Count Alarik, "but not live to see her miserable through me, or me despised through her."

We now heard some one singing at the distance of two rooms. It was Adelaide's clear, young voice. She came in dancing, bright as a May sun, but started at the sight of Count Alarik, who, with his arms crossed upon the table, sat immovable, and fixed on her a severe and sharp glance.

She nevertheless approached him, laid her hand upon his shoulder, and looked in his eyes with an enchanting expression of tenderness and disquiet. He opened his arms to her; she wound her white arms round his neck, and laid with a childish grace her cheek against his.

"The oak and the vine!" thought I, gladly. I felt myself superfluous, and made myself—what it is always beautiful to be able to do in such circumstances—invisible.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

Our politics the toilet's law,
 And our republic is our kitchen.
 Stick to thy sewing, head and hand,
 Thy 'broidery needeth perseverance;
 And trust me, God thy native land
 Can rule without thy interference.

FRU LENNGREN.

It often strikes me, with respect to those wonderful scales with which the shell-fish defends himself, and keeps himself undisturbed by light or the influence of the elements, that without them an end might possibly be put to the causeless fears of his life, and an entrance opened to a richer and more extensive existence.

Extract from a Letter from B—n.

At Edla's request, I had prevailed with the President to agree to her remaining at home when we went to balls and into company. But he became speedily displeased with this, and I was obliged to listen to many and long discourses regarding the late Frederika and her principles; that young girls should never distinguish themselves by anything uncommon; that society had its claims upon people; people their duties towards society; that women should be early accustomed to submit themselves to a certain restraint, for on their power to willingly accommodate themselves to the wishes of others depended their happiness in life. The best way, said the President, of making people unsociable and misanthropical, is to let them shut themselves up, and so on. I had long thought that the late Presidentska was really wearisome with all her wisdom, and I became quite sick as soon as I saw

that the President was going to bring her forward ; but as I could not in person set myself up against her worshipful shadow, I sought out for myself some authority which I set up against her before the President. I found one also ; for, by the best luck in the world, I had had a brother-in-law of the name of Stapplander, the Burgomaster in Westervik, who had been a college friend of the President, and who was much esteemed by him for his good head and acquirements. Now, when the President came forward with the late Frederika, I took up the late Stapplander ; and not a little surprised was the President—and not a little astonished would the good man himself have been, could he have come again and listened—at the thoughts and speeches on the education of young women which he received in a present from me. In the mean time, this method had very good effect. Nevertheless, the President often said, when Edla had not accompanied us to some supper :

“ I do not know what the meaning of this can be. Neither does she draw or play more ; she is hardly to be seen except at meal hours. What does she do ? ”

I avoided for some time a direct answer to this question, for I feared that the President was yet unprepared to hear reason on her occupations. One fine day he went himself into her room, and surprised her in the midst of her papers and books. Quite pale and serious he came down to me, seated himself just opposite to me, and began with solemn gravity :

“ I had thought that that person whom I had taken into my house to attend to my daughters' education—that person to whom I had entrusted the important duty of supplying the place of my late wife to her children—I had thought that she would make to herself a law of conscientiously following those principles which I have made it a duty not to leave her in ignorance of.”

“ Heaven knows ! ” thought I.

“ I had thought,” continued the President, “ that my entire confidence would have been responded to. I had not expected to have had the sorrow of seeing my daughters encouraged to set themselves up contrary to my express will, my taste, and my pleasure ; that instead of housewifely and amiable women, to have the sorrow of seeing in my house most learned, pedantic, and ink-fingered——”

I was on the point of laughing ; but, instead, became unexpectedly moved, and answered with tears in my eyes—

“What I am certain of is, that the President desires his daughters’ happiness.”

“And therefore,” answered he, “that they should remain in their own sphere—that they should follow their destination.”

“And what is a woman’s destination?”

“To become a wife and a mother.”

“Should then all those who do not marry—whom Nature has treated as step-children—all who, for the sake of noble duties, or by inclination, or for any reason whatever, grow old unmarried—should even I, as unmarried, with all these, have mistaken my destination—should our life be aimless?”

The President was silent a moment ; but said afterwards, smiling, and with a slight inclination of the head, that I was yet young, and would probably yet alter my situation in life.

“Probably not,” answered I, “for I am poor, and not handsome.”

The President was so good as to make an unacquiescing sign to this last, but I continued :

“And even if I should yet marry, my question would yet remain the same regarding the millions of women who do not marry. Have they mistaken their destination? are they useless in the world?”

As the President did not answer, I continued :

“If we are to grant to woman a separate sphere of activity in life, different from that of man, may we not generally assign to it the softening, living, and arranging power, which our Maker seems principally to have made innate in woman? A woman’s activity as a wife and a mother is only one means, perhaps the noblest, in which this activity can be employed. But innumerable chasms are yet found in life for this power to fill. Many such we already see filled by womanly activity, and made blessed—many such yet remain. Woman is not yet all for the community that she could become—and she is not yet so free and happy as she might be.”

“There now have we the old song of the rights of women again,” said the President. “But if even I should grant that Mamselle Rönquist is not altogether wrong ; if I grant that a woman can even without marriage make herself useful and

happy, I cannot notwithstanding see how, except by an activity suited to her powers. That then she will always be in domestic life, as a friend, as an instructress, as a guardian of the domestic affairs, and so on. But tell me, my best Mamselle, how shall Plato, how shall the study of philosophy and dialectics help a woman to become more useful and more happy in the world? What in heaven's name is a young girl to do with Plato?"

"To learn from him to think clearly, and consequently to learn from him to look into herself and the world that surrounds her."

"And whether shall this abstract thinking conduct her? To become useless for our every-day life's duties and comfort; to become pedantic, disputatious, and insupportable. What joy shall this study bring with it for herself, or for others?"

"The greatest, the most enduring that a human being can enjoy—to clearly understand herself and the world, to find her place in it, and that activity which is adapted to her disposition. The consequence will be the enjoyment of herself and her life, as well as the ability to make her powers available to others. Happiness itself is nothing else than an activity suited to our wants."

"What shall Edla do with Plato?" asked the President impatiently.

"Through his help develop her eminent gifts of understanding," answered I, "and find in her thoughts a full compensation for what fortune has denied her of the tenderer enjoyments of feelings and sympathy. Edla is plain, uncommonly plain, and of a silent and reserved nature; she will not easily become loved. Fate denied her the soft dove-like enjoyments of earth—well then! like the bird of paradise, she shall raise herself above it."

The President looked out of the window. I saw that he was touched. After a pause he said:

"Are there not other, and more usual methods of compensation to be found, than philosophic studies? Are not accomplishments, womanly industry, society, and, above all, the enjoyments which religion and active beneficence give; are not these more efficient means?"

"For many people, yes!—not for Edla. Were she lovely and charming, I would nevertheless counsel her to that path

which her determined disposition shows to be the only right one for her. Edla has a strong and penetrating, a truly manly mind!"

"Yes, yes!" said the President sighing, "that she has from her father!"

(The President did not dislike this so much.)

"Edla," I continued, "has no turn for accomplishments, and no taste for them. She makes no progress either in music or drawing. Besides, for accomplishments really to suffice for a person's life, it is requisite that from being an amateur he should rise to be an artist. For woman's work Edla has neither disposition nor inclination."

"And because she has no inclination to do anything," interrupted the President, "she should perhaps be left at peace to be idle! Mamselle Rönquist, I cannot agree with these ideas! Quite differently thought the late Frederika. She considered that education should, with or against the child's will, develop all the powers which lie in the mind, as by complete practice in gymnastics we develop the powers of the limbs. The child from want of reason may strive against these, but in riper years will find that through these alone he is become a fully developed human creature."

"The child, but not the young person, should be forced. The late Stapplander said, that the dispositions lie slumbering in a child, and must by a general exercise be awakened, in order that the man himself may become conscious of them. But one soon perceives one disposition stand out beyond the others, and the further the person advances in development the more he ought to cultivate the particular disposition, provided it is a good one, even though setting aside—seldom entirely neglecting—the rest of his talents or capabilities. The late Stapplander said, that without this a man all his life long ran the danger of being an invalid, a formless being, who had never learned to understand himself. Edla will not abandon herself to idleness; on the contrary, she will labour more than ever, but in a fixed direction; she will not fritter away her strength in a multifarious activity, but she will collect it for a given object."

"Stapplander," said the President thoughtfully; "Stapplander then thought that every human being has his own fixed and inborn dispositions?"

“Yes; but he thought that this disposition displayed itself in man often late, often not at all clearly during the whole of life. The causes might be various, but they most frequently lay in the rather narrowing and repressing, instead of enfranchising, power of education. This applied especially to the education of women. Meanwhile, this uncertainty has not happened with Edla; her natural disposition is as determined by an interior necessity, as her life in some respects seems to be an exterior one. Edla will first experience the influence and the enjoyment of religion when she reflects on and can clearly understand that which others need only to comprehend by their feelings. And society! how could Edla have pleasure in society, when her appearance, but still more her temper, repulses every one from her? One can no more give oneself an easy and comfortable turn for society than one can give oneself beauty. But let Edla develop her high gifts of mind, let her become more at home with the world and its arrangements, and then she will receive pleasure from society, though it may be not in the ordinary manner. She will there find a number of subjects for reflection; she will find many men who feel themselves happy in carrying on an erudite conversation, and she will then from a noble position extract that enjoyment from social intercourse which is one of the greatest pleasures of life. I am certain that even the President will then have great joy in his daughter.”

“Even granted,” said the President, “that in town she can have some enjoyment of her learning, what is she to do with it in the country, on a solitary and distant estate, where I propose to settle myself hereafter?”

“Precisely in the country will Edla have the greatest enjoyment of her acquirements; she has a great taste for natural history, and it seems to be before all others a suitable study for a woman. The late Stapplander said thus: ‘With that fine tact which is peculiar to woman, with her instinct, clear even to divination, what incalculable good might she not do through a more extended knowledge of the organisation of nature, and in the application of its productions?’ And besides the enjoyment of being admitted into nature’s mysteries, she might even by these means acquire that which an active beneficence confers. The woman learned in the

science of nature might easily become her countrymen's good genius."

"Yes! and their doctor, quack, etc. etc.; the ruin of the one, the laughing-stock of the others. Ah! my best Mamselle, my best Mamselle Rönquist, one may say what one pleases for learning, yet—what is the end of these our learned ladies? Do they not figure wherever they come as abortive productions, as insupportable as they are ridiculous?"

"In books, yes! as in Molière's '*Femmes Savantes*,' and others; but do we now in our days find them so, except in books? And may they not perhaps figure as such in books, because they have not really possessed what exactly ought to be given to them, namely, fundamental and solid acquirements,—because their natural disposition had struggled in the dark, and against difficulties which they had not the power to conquer alone and unassisted. People have taken the unsuccessful for the impossible, seen in the mistake a fault of the direction itself, and forsaken the way on which they themselves cast stones; and more than once women have been, like the bold Titans, driven from the higher regions they sought to conquer; more than once they have been banished—sometimes with scorn, sometimes with polite admonitions—down to the kitchen and the spinning-wheel: these periods of weakness, however, in the strong are long since past. How much good a woman can work for the community, when, with well-grounded learning, and the perspicuity of genius in her thinking, she appears in public life, is shown in our days, among many others, by England's Miss Martineau. But even without advancing into public life, woman seems in our time more than ever to be called to widen her horizon, and to fortify her powers of thinking. How many mothers are called upon to guide their sons' education; how many high-minded men seek in their wives a friend, who can understand their striving, and through an affectionate sympathy can enliven their activity, and are enabled to participate in that which they feel for the higher interests of man?"

The President said, with a little satirical look, "And must one necessarily read Plato to understand this? Is there no way to the light but through Plato?"

"When the question," I answered, "is to put a young

person in condition to regulate himself, his own exterior and interior world; to obtain a view of their whole and their parts, as well as an insight into their life and connexion, I certainly know no better teacher than the one you have just mentioned; that is to say, for a grown-up person, who can understand him. He is, moreover, a teacher who leads one to think for oneself."

"Let her not in the mean time, my good Mamselle, mention that she reads him; or she may otherwise make herself certain of a rich harvest of ridicule from most people."

"And what does that signify, Mr. President? Let people smile; but let her learn, and sooner or later be made happy by the approbation of the wise and thoughtful. But knowledge is not useful alone because it helps to acquire esteem, not even for its active utility in society. It makes its possessor happy in himself; it turns his narrow room into a rich world; and by his solitary lamp he can bring the riches of God's creation which prevail in the life of nature and of spirits before his admiring glances. And that world which he understands, in which he lives by thought, will become dear to him; and he shall, even though perhaps poor in gold and human love, yet have enough, and more than enough. The world is full of examples, which show that life is never so rich, so dear to any, as to the thinker. To live innocent and happy on earth, Mr. President, is already so beautiful——"

"Only do not turn Edla into a pedantic and pretending woman," said the President; "such I cannot endure."

"Her pure womanly mind, her shyness, and, above all, her seriousness and piety, will keep her from this. The best means of killing these enemies of all comfort in the half-educated woman, would be to conduct her to a more grounded knowledge; even in this case, one might commonly take the cure whence one had taken the malady."

"And if Edla had a turn and taste for feats of war, perhaps Mamselle would wish to make a general of her? Or if she had a decided love for anatomy, a professor of anatomy? Mamselle probably belongs to the Saint Simonists; and Mamselle desires, like them, to give to woman, in every part of the community of citizens, the same privileges and the same employments as to the man?"

(The President always Mamselled me very much when he was displeased with me.)

“No, certainly not,” answered I; “for thence would arise disorder, and no harmony. Such inclinations as those the President has just named, are, I think, to be considered as real misdirections in a woman’s mind, and might perhaps be easily enough corrected. They besides occur so seldom that it would be a pity to annihilate what would be for the well-being of all, on account of the unusual tastes of some; and the well-being of all depends on each fulfilling the part in life assigned to them by nature and by God.”

“And nevertheless,” said the President, “you ladies complain, from the beginning of the world to the present day, that your rights are limited by the despotism of man. And as you yourself want to make a philosopher of Edla, why not as well a general or a professor of anatomy, if such was her desire? I see not, by heaven, why not!”

“There is a very decided and great difference between an activity—such as, for instance, the development of life in the world of thought; which does not in the slightest degree snatch a woman from the place her Maker has assigned her; which only makes her existence and her world clear to herself, and renders her interesting to others—there is a great difference between such an activity and the employment whose practice would take her from what properly belongs to womanhood—her true beauty, and, if I may so say, the nobler use of her life. What regards the complaining of my sex; the President will allow me to say, that nothing has ever been said, and repeated again and again for thousands of years, without possessing a sure foundation. Woman has really yet right to demand from mankind and from general opinion an enlargement of her sphere of usefulness, and elements for her manifold powers. But she shall not encroach on the duties of man—that would be the mutual misfortune of both sexes.”

“Yes, yes!” said the President, “but it is just such a misfortune which women’s pretensions in our days seem to threaten us with.”

“Enlighten them,” I said, “and the danger will pass. Give them what appertains to them, and they will no longer complain. It is in these days when marriage is gradually

ceasing to be the general rule, that it seems to be more and more necessary to give woman of all classes an occupation independent of marriage—and to give her the means of maintaining herself in satisfaction and joy.”

“And why is marriage becoming less general, Mamselle Rönquist? Precisely on account of the exaggerated pretensions of women. A man’s powers are early taken up in his duty as a citizen; he has his bread to earn, and must abandon agreeable acquirements for serious and often wearisome employments; and when through his industry and pains he has succeeded in getting a firm footing in life, and wishes to share it with a wife, he only finds fine and elegant ladies, who having had nothing else to do but to make themselves erudite and clever, then find the worthy man as much too coarse, as he finds them too fine. Our women, Mamselle Rönquist, should have more sense. They should form their education in reference to the husband with whom they have a chance of being united—they should have the sense to conform themselves a little to him, and we should then have more and happier marriages.”

“Over-training is not true training,” answered I; “the girl endowed with talents and powers of pleasing, who considers a worthy and well-educated fellow-citizen as coarse (provided he is really not so), is an over-trained being. Should not her charms exactly serve her to brighten the circle in which he lives? He gives her protection and a sphere of action, it is hers to give him comfort and happiness. But one person need not stop growing that another may grow up to him. Right growth and strength besides do not lie in the development of a *fine* education. Perhaps we may ascribe the less frequency of marriage to other causes than any such disproportion; perhaps there may be already in some parts of the world more people than the world can fully sustain; perhaps wisdom both in man and woman may forbid the entering into an engagement which might increase the already disproportioned population; perhaps—ay, there would be much to say on this score, but O, how many less unhappy marriages, how many more happy beings, would be found on earth, were a larger and freer utility allowed to woman; if the different tastes which lie in the sex were seriously cultivated and wisely directed. Society and domestic

life would gain by it ; so many good and noble powers would not, as now, sink into a death-like slumber for want of nourishment, or degenerate to destroyers of peace ; we should not see so many nullities in this world, and who suffer in the consciousness of being so. In truth, there are moments when the woman of Luther's religion can envy the Catholic her cloisters, dark and misunderstood as these places of refuge mostly are."

"Bah! bah! Sophisms! sophisms! my best Mamselle!" said the President, as he rose and stretched himself up. "Well! do with Edla as you please," continued he, "and as best pleases her. But what I expressly require is, that no learned ladies may be made of the little ones ; promise me that, give me your hand on it, Mamselle Rönnquist!"

I could promise it without fear, for the little ones were monstrously hard to teach, however much quicksilver for other things they might have in their composition.

The President went, but stopped at the door, and said, as he looked up at the ceiling :

"If Edla requires any books, or lessons of any kind, let me know, Mamselle Rönnquist."

I promised it thankfully, and joyful at Edla's emancipation, hastened to inform her of it. On my way, I said to myself, as I often do : "How much goodness is to be found in the world ; how many good beings there are !"

CHAPTER XV.

THE GENIUS OF LOVE.

The different spheres of life are not mechanically arranged in subordinate order, but rather are integral parts of each other. And when a man feels himself at home in a woman's heart, and she in his, it is the re-echo of his anticipated heaven to which he listens, and the presentiment of a higher power which attaches her to him—they are both suns to each other—— *B——n.*

IN the mean time the spring came. With a glance of God's love the sun smiled over the earth ; she felt it and awoke from her sleep, and breathed forth her morning prayer in the silent but expressive language of the perfumed flowers.

I would desire to know what passes in thy bosom, O earth ; when thy birds begin to sing, thy waves to dance ; when thou clothest thyself in a dress so fair, that even during the shades of night the stars of heaven and the eyes of man

behold thee with love; when millions of small winged beings arise from thy beds of flowers and fill the air with the harmonious murmur of their light life; when starts of joy run through all thy veins; when the whole of inspired nature is a look of love, and a hymn of joy;—I would desire to know if thou feelest the joy which proceeds from thee, the unspeakable gladness which thou breathest. What I know is, that thou givest new life to the heart of man, a more vivid course to his blood; that thou freest his spirit from the oppressing grey-winter of life; that leaning on nature's bosom he can feel a joy independent of all others, a pure life-enjoyment—love to life. Oh, that I could conduct each invalid in body or mind, out in the spring morning, lay him on the young flowers, let him contemplate the dark blue heaven, and all that quiet and living glory which the earth produces; let him feel the warmth of the sunbeams, the balsamic coolness of the breeze, all that sincere goodness in the air and in nature which speaks to the heart with the accent of a friend, with a glance of God. Certainly here for a moment the unfortunate would forget the ungrateful one who has wounded him; forget the pains which gnaw at his heart-strings; remorse would here repose and believe in pardon, the often deceived would hope again; certainly the son of suffering, yet before his death, would enjoy some hours of care-free happiness. At his evening he might look back to that spring morning and say: "Even I have been happy on earth!"

It is spring in the north, and all the town-dwellers are bidden as guests to the rural festivity. Veronica and Stelaria embroider the splendid cloth which covers the festive table, the mid-day torch is lighted, the bird with its melodious sighs—"the wandering voice,"—and the lark with its joyous song calls out to the rich woods, to the sunny field; they sing: "Come, come! Glorious is life in the country!" And the town-gates open, and an innumerable multitude stream out from the confined to the free. Here we see the family calèche with papa and mamma, and little sons and daughters placed amongst the bundles and packets; there the more modest gig, with the father and mother, and the little one who sits squeezed between them; here the stately landau with the "Marshal of the Court," the Countess, and the parroquet—where are they all going? To the country—to the country!

to estates, and country-houses, orangeries, conservatories, dairies, distilleries, etc. etc. etc. Who can count all the bobbing chaises which carry hungry men ready for dinner out to the inns in the fields? What healths there to the memory of Bellman!*

Let us see the foot passengers who wander out of the gates of Stockholm to enjoy life in the beautiful scenery around. Here we have a respectable family of artisans, who go to spread their cloth on the green plots of the Djurgården; here a couple of lovers who go to pick forget-me-not, and to write their names on the leg of a statue in the park near Drottningholm.†

See that elegant family party! ladies with parasols, and gentlemen in frock-coats, standing with bunches of lilac in their hands round the great urn at Rosendal,‡ peeping and wondering if the royal family will appear! If you wish to see more finished or more witty sketches, seek for them in Count Hjalmar Mörner; but yet a few more hasty contours of the friendly scenes of spring.

Young girls dance with light feet out in the fields, forget all the vanity and show with which their town life had infected them, and flowers amongst flowers, they become simple, beautiful, and faultless as they; they form friendships, they bind wreathes, they praise God, and are happy. Young men swarm out among the woods, the winds, and the waters—the strength, which is streaming through nature, enhances the life in their bosoms; they think the whole world is theirs, every rosy tint of morning, every golden evening cloud, writes for them a promise of victories and glory. And the aged—they go out, supported by the arm of a son, oftener by that of an affectionate daughter, oftener yet perhaps by a crutch; they go out to warm themselves in the sun, to sit on a bench, and hear the song of the birds, and breathe in the fresh air, to rejoice themselves in the sun; the more fortunate amongst them to rejoice themselves in their grandchildren's joy. And the children, the children! O ye little, soft, beautiful, innocent beings, favourites of God and men, the

* A favourite comic poet, and writer of comic songs, died in 1796.—M. H.

† A palace in the lake *Mälern*, near Stockholm. The summer residence of the Crown Prince and Princess of Sweden.—M. H.

‡ A summer residence of the Royal Family in the Djurgården.—M. H.

spring seems shaped for you, and ye for the spring ; when I see you amongst the flowers, with bright butterflies dancing around you, I wonder what the higher world can yet have lovelier.

The President's family also obeyed the call of spring. We left the town, and in the end of the month of May found ourselves in the President's beautiful country-seat some miles from Stockholm. This was no show-house, but an inexpressibly comfortable home. The family's favourite place of reunion was a beautiful little gallery containing some pictures and marble statues. Adelaide furnished it every day with fresh flowers. Adelaide always lived fully in the present moment, and here in the country, divided from the pleasures and dissipations of the world, she was doubly as charming as in town. She here became Count Alarik's attentive pupil ; and that nature, whose mysteries he revealed to her, and whose life of love she taught him to know, became doubly beautiful, and doubly dear to them both. Here Pygmalion initiated his Galatea to a higher love ; here her young heart beat with unspeakable and bright presentiments. Eve awoke to consciousness on Adam's breast ; he saw his image brightened in her eye, and Eden surrounded them both, and flowers, and birds, and whispering winds, seemed to bear witness with them : " O how blest to love ! "

Here in the morning I took long wanderings with the little ones, and taught them to begin a nearer acquaintance with the productions of that nature in whose lap they as women would one day find so much consolation and so much pure happiness. It was a joy to see the little beautiful and lively children running round and gathering the flowers, which I, with the Swedish Flora in my hand, examined, named, and in whose qualities I instructed the little botanists.

Here I also had the opportunity of making better acquaintance with Count Alarik's character and mind. I studied them with an attention which my tenderness for Adelaide excited, and I was not always pleased ; and many times I felt an unquiet foreboding regarding her future. Count Alarik was a noble and powerful man, but hasty in temper, and inclined to a despotic will ; he was sometimes suspicious, and then often unreasonable. He yet loved Adelaide even too strongly and passionately ; for, philosopher as he was, he worshipped her

beauty, and was often a slave under its influence. He wanted besides to have her by far too exclusively to himself; there were moments when father, sisters, and friends were grudged her company and her friendly glances, nay, in which the sun even was not allowed to look at her. Count Alarik desired that when we were out she should wear thick white veils; he desired to have her near him like a secret known to him only; I believe he had the very desire to have her heart and person under lock and key. This domination over Adelaide seemed to increase, and with every day his eye seemed more watchfully to rest upon her; every day his eye-brows were more violently contracted, when even at a distance he caught a glimpse of the young Otto, and every day his temper became more unequal. Adelaide was the only one of us who did not remark it. She was at the same time of too affectionate and too volatile a nature, and besides not yet in the least subdued by the Count's despotic disposition. With indescribable humility she would sometimes bow to his will or caprice; and it seemed to be her delight to permit herself to be governed: at other times she was the despot, and with an alternatively sportive, alternatively defying charm, she resisted his will, and forced him with a sort of bewitching power to obey hers. But if Count Alarik had his evil moments, it must be confessed that in his good ones he gave a rich compensation. None could then be more engaging than he, none exercise a more beneficial influence on the minds of all.

It was during one of his good moments that we, one lovely evening in the beginning of June, took a walk in the beautiful neighbourhood. Adelaide was leaning on Alarik's arm. He was mild and gay; his voice when he spoke was inexpressibly soft, he looked at Adelaide with speechless love, and enjoyed the glorious nature around us. We went into a little dell surrounded by streams; the air was warm, and it was with true enjoyment that we saw the cool dark green waters, and heard their murmur. Adelaide here took off her bonnet, and let for a minute the rising silver spray of the waves moisten her beautiful face and her hair.

"See! how crowned with pearls you become!" said Edla, who now contemplated her fair sister with unenvious delight. "I saw thee with pearls in thy hair, in a dream last night."

“ Pearls,” said Adelaide, “ signify tears !” and immediately, as if called forth by a sorrowful presentiment, real tears rolled over her cheeks. Count Alarik became uneasy, we all came around her ; at the same moment she gave us one of her brightest smiles, wiped away her tears, and we continued our wandering ; but we were all oppressed, we did not well know why. At the end of the valley we came to some ruins of a house which had been burned down. On Count Alarik’s questioning respecting them, Adelaide answered, that some years back a peasant’s house had stood there. The fire broke out in the night. The husband was absent, and it was with difficulty that the wife succeeded in saving her three children and herself from the flames. Some neighbours who had collected, looked speechlessly and helplessly upon the scene of destruction. As soon as the young wife had come to her senses, she looked around and uttered a cry of alarm ; her husband’s old mother, who was lame and out of her senses, remained still in a room of the burning house. With the anguish of despair she besought the spectators to rescue the unfortunate woman from so horrible a death, but none would venture into the house whose roof now threatened to fall in. When she saw that her prayers to the men who stood around were fruitless, she laid her youngest child, which she held in her arms, on the ground, cast an imploring glance up to heaven as if of intercession for the little one, and rushed resolutely into the house. A minute after the roof fell in ; one piercing human cry made its way through the rush and crush of the ruined dwelling ; but only one cry—and all was silent. The neighbours looked with wild eyes on the high whirling flames ; the children called and cried—but no mother returned through the flames to them—her bones were found the next day among the ashes.

This relation, which Adelaide gave at once so simply, and with such lively and true feeling, made a sorrowful but beneficial impression upon us all. It is so strengthening, so good, to grant a pure admiration to a pure and powerful action. Count Alarik broke the silence by asking the woman’s name, but Adelaide did not know it, could not even remember to have heard her name. A cloud at this passed over Edla’s brow.

“ This woman,” said she, “ achieved a really noble action

—and she is forgotten, and her name is not known;—and a man, who during the whole course of his life has not done one pure and self-denying action, but who has received the accidental gift of genius, wins the applause of his contemporaries, and his name and his works live from generation to generation—and justly so—for to him fortune has given to cast out seed, which bears fruit to immortality—but it is his *fortune*—and it is crowned with laurels, while her *merit* and her heart are alike covered with ashes. What a great difference, what a wonderful injustice in the life of these two people, and the influence of their actions upon earth!”

“Not so great, as perhaps at the first glance appears,” said Count Alarik; “and without actions of such a kind and spirit as that of which we have just spoken, genius would have had little to say upon earth.”

“How do you mean?” asked Adelaide attentively.

“That the genius of love heralds the genius of art in life. There are people who act nobly, and others who sing and immortalise these actions. Without that deep and powerful love which makes relations and friends suffer with joy and die for each other; without actions which show that ‘love is stronger than death,’ the pencil and the chisel had never produced their masterpieces, no interceding eye had gleamed through song, and music had been without language. It is the inspired glance of love which lays the word on the fire-tongue of art—it can never utter anything that is beautiful which has not been dictated by the other!”

“But glory, but renown!” exclaimed Edla. “The individuals who gave a subject to song, die and are forgotten, if no circumstance, such as birth or riches, casts up their name out of night. The actions of the lesser die with them, or only live through the bard—but the bard himself lives for ever upon earth—his name is immortal there.”

“Blessed are they who have done good, and are forgotten—who work what is immortal, and die unsung!” said Count Alarik, with an indescribable expression on his noble countenance; “no self-interest, no vanity has spotted their hearts—they have done virtuously for virtue’s sake—they may hope——”

Edla coloured painfully; it gave me pain, and as I thought

that she was not quite wrong in the feeling she had just expressed, I sought to defend it against Count Alarik.

"A fair and glorious renown must however be good," said I; "and it should not be indifferent to a person to be esteemed by his fellow-creatures. To have a noble pride in it seems to me to be not only human, but even right. Besides, a good renown is not merely a bright wreath; it is also a real power in the hand of its owner, with which he can work exceeding much good."

"As such, or as a means to effect what one desires, I also consider it for a real good," answered the Count; "*au reste*—." He stopped, and a sort of Byronic smile played over his fine lips; afterwards he continued with mild seriousness:

"The consequences of the actions of men lie for the most part, as regards their extent, far beyond their calculation. An insignificant seed can grow to a large tree; a flaming fire be extinguished in ashes. If the victories of the hero have wrought more for the good of humanity than an unknown being's quiet life of love, the All-seeing eye above us alone can know. Each one does good in his own way and in his own vocation, and his work will remain, even though it seem to pass away, and will bear fruit in its own time. Glorious renown, best Edla," continued he, as he turned to her with a full and cordial glance, "ought not to be mixed with immortality upon earth. A name is repeated through generations by millions of people—that is fame. The good which you have planned and accomplished, the spirit which proceeding from you works and propagates itself through a continuation of ages—that is true immortality upon earth."

CHAPTER XVI.

EDLA.

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace. *Isaiah.*

TOWARDS the end of the month of June, Count Alarik left us to return to his estate, that he might there prepare all for the reception of his young Countess. The separation of the lovers was not to last longer than a couple of months, but one might have thought by their parting that it was to have

been for several years. Adelaide tried in vain to smile; the tears poured over her young beautiful face; Count Alarik could not tear himself from her, until Adelaide herself, alarmed at his violence, gently pushed him from her, when having once more kissed her lovely hands and pressed them to his breast, he tore himself resolutely away, and darted from the room. In the beginning I could not refrain from weeping with Adelaide, but afterwards sought to dissipate her sorrow, with the preparations for her bridal, and in talking of all that we had to cut out and to sow for her outfit. Her clever and industrious hand was soon in full occupation. The thought of appearing before Alarik adorned and attractive gave wings to her needle, and as she worked she sang one joyous song after another.

The President contemplated her industry with cordial pleasure, and heard her happy voice.

“Adelaide,” he often said, “will be a real good wife and housewife; but Edla—poor Edla!” and he shrugged his shoulders with a hard grimace. Poor Edla in the mean time passed her hours undisturbed between her books and solitary walks in the neighbourhood, and had unrestrained permission to occupy herself according to her own taste.

Have you seen on a clouded day how the heaven is cleared by the friendly winds—how, through the dark clouds, the blue eyes of the firmament gleam forth brighter and freer?—then have you seen an image of what passed in Edla’s soul. A new life was dawning within her; again and again broke through the night of a long suffering, a gleam of bright hope; day after day she became more friendly and gay; nay, there were moments when her countenance, otherwise so plain, received a real charm from the expression of tranquillity and clearness which reposed on it. She often mixed in conversation, but one no longer heard any bitter remark, any word which betrayed pretensions to learning; never any school phrases or technical terms; but on the contrary, many words which gave pleasure by their clearness of thought and precision of expression—many which gave rise to conversations of high interest. She caused me the purest joy, and I remarked with sincere pleasure that the President, often when he pretended to be reading some newspaper, listened atten-

tively to what she was saying, although he took good care that no one should remark it.

The President, since he had left Edla liberty to pursue her own course, had showed himself even colder towards her than before. In her, on the contrary, might be remarked, that her father's yieldingness had inclined her heart towards him. She was attentive to his least desires; the dishes he liked came often on the table during her housekeeping month, and were remarkably well dressed; his tea was strong and warm; the President found his home yet more comfortable than before; in the beginning he did not himself well know how, nay, he began to put everything to my account, and now and then fancied that he found a certain resemblance between me and the late Frederika—one time in my voice, another in my taste and dress, sometimes in my profile seen from the left side. Had I not been so earnest in making Edla's merits to be felt, and thereby diminished the sum of my own, then—who knows to what a height my resemblance to the late Presidentska might have arisen?—who knows, indeed!—Hum! hum!—

The President was at this time in great trouble about a journey he was forced to make to his mines on the borders of Lapland, and from which he could not return until Adelaide's marriage. The summer was rainy and cold, and the President had strong symptoms of rheumatism; and between you and me, my reader, the President was something helpless in attending to himself when he was well, and very apt to complain when he was sick. He required more than any one else to be surrounded with care and comforts.

One evening we were collected round the fire, for the weather was so cold that we were obliged to heat almost all the rooms. I sat quite near the stove, warming my frozen feet; Edla was making the tea a little further off in the room; and from the drawing-room we heard Adelaide, who was teaching her little sisters to sing the "Little Collier Boy." The President sat in an arm-chair right before the fire, and lamented over his journey, which was to be commenced on the following day.

"Were not Adelaide engaged," said he, "and had such a deal to do with her bridal paraphernalia, I would have taken

her with me ; then, at all events, I know that I should have been well attended to. But now, this is not to be thought of. The household requires also to be looked after up there—who is to do this ? If the late Frederika lived——”

I sat just turned towards the President with that side of my profile which was like the late Presidentska, and I wondered if now, in the moment of embarrassment, this likeness would not appear more striking. But the President was silent, looked straight into the fire, and bit his seal ring.

“ If I might—if I could——” Edla now said, with a voice so weak and so trembling that it was scarcely heard.

My genius now whispered to me to seek my knitting in the next room, whence I heard the following conversation :

“ What do you say ?” was the President’s answer to Edla’s stammering offer.

“ If I could be useful to papa,” she said more firmly as she came nearer, “ it would make me happy.”

“ You !” said the President, not without bitterness, “ you have more important things to attend to ;—remain you with your studies, your books, your Plato.”

Edla was hurt, and made a movement as if to draw herself back ; but conquering herself, she went near, and begged with tearful eyes :

“ Let me go with you—let me take care of papa ! I will willingly leave everything for that.”

“ I do not exact,” said the President coldly, “ such great sacrifices from my children ; I do not ask that they should leave their pleasures for my comfort. I did so before, perhaps ; but I have seen I was wrong. Remain you with your books, Edla.”

This moment was decisive. I trembled for fear that Edla’s wounded feelings might prevent her from making a new trial on the President’s heart ; I feared that this moment would for ever divide father and daughter from each other. But Edla drew herself a little farther off, and said mildly :

“ And if my books admonish me of my duty ? And if that goodness papa has shown me, has made this duty dearer to me than everything else ?” She stopped ; the President said nothing. “ I shall not ask more,” she continued ; “ I shall not be obtrusive. Papa does not love me, and I know that I have not been in the right—I have not deserved to be

loved; but—but I would if I could make up——” She stopped again.

“The fault has been mutual, Edla,” said the President with cold friendliness. “I have no right to expect love from you, when I have not made you happy; and it would be egotism of me were I now to avail myself of what your sentiment of duty offers.”

“Oh, this is hard—very hard!” said Edla with deep pain, but without bitterness. She drew herself back, and was about to leave the room.

“Edla!” called the President hastily, as he turned and stretched his arms towards her; “Edla, my child! come here!” Large tears stood in his eyes. Edla threw herself weeping on his bosom.

A silent, long, and heartfelt embrace succeeded, on which the angels smiled.

“Forgive—forgive—my child!” said the President with a broken voice; “I wanted to try you. Your mildness enchants me. We shall go together. God bless thee, my child! This was wanting to my happiness.”

Edla let her head repose on her father’s shoulder, and her tears flowed unrepressed.

Softly and melodiously Adelaide’s silver voice rose from the next room. She sung to the guitar:

Blest, oh blest, are they who weep
 On the reconciled breast;
 Who forgive, forget, and reap
 Rapture from the voice loved best.
 Blest, oh blest, are they who wind
 Their arms round the recover’d friend;
 Who there a holy heaven find,
 And peace which love alone can send.
 Oh, let us bitter doubts redeem,
 And heal the heart forlorn and sear;
 Stream, thou fount of love! oh stream,
 Reconciliation’s holy tear!

It was the first time that Edla had wept on the bosom of a friend, and that friend was her father; it was the first time she had felt the tender relations between parent and child. Her feelings were overflowing, but her timidity and her habit of mastering herself made her, after the first moment of emotion was past, quickly recover herself; she once again gratefully embraced her father, and left the room.

The President was also at the same time deeply moved and sincerely happy, and that evening did not speak much more of the late Presidentska and her principles, but all the more of his own, which he had mixed with mine; and took great pains most earnestly to prove to me what I had only a short time before laboured to prove to him. He also spoke much and with fatherly tenderness of Edla and her prospects.

"God knows," said he finally, "how it will go with me during this journey. Learned ladies generally do not very well understand those trifling earthly cares, and Edla by nature is not inclined to think of such. But it may go as it will regarding that, I thank God for what has happened this evening. I could not have thought that Edla was so full of tenderness. She shall never more hear from me an angry word."

In the mean time, Adelaide helped her sister to pack up her things; to prepare herself for the journey, and thought of everything which could add to their father's comfort and pleasure. The little ones helped with great glee in the packing. Even the servants in the house seemed to remark that something good and something joyful had happened; they looked all happy, and were yet more willing than usual. It is pleasant to see how everywhere in good houses, and under good masters, the servants partake in the joy and sorrow of the latter; how everything is one—one home and one family.

Late in the evening, after Adelaide was gone to bed, Edla went in, and seated herself beside her.

"Are you sleeping, Adelaide?" she asked softly.

"No," answered she, stretched out her hand, and laid it on her sister's knee. Edla took the swan-white hand, and raised it to her lips, as with a weak voice she said:

"Adelaide, forgive all my unkindness towards you."

"Say not so," begged Adelaide; "you have never been unkind towards me, Edla; it was only that you have not been happy."

"No, I have not been so," said Edla, "but I shall become so; for I shall learn from you, Adelaide, to become good and mild."

"My sweet Edla!" exclaimed Adelaide, and threw her

arms round her sister's neck, "I am not good—oh, I am so faulty!"

"Hear, Adelaide," said Edla with affectionate earnestness; "make Alarik happy—become worthy of him. You are a good angel, remain so; but these faults which you mention—your levity, your thoughtlessness—correct them, lay them aside, for Alarik's sake."

"I will—I shall," said Adelaide with tearful eyes.

"Do not go to Aunt Ulla's during his absence," continued Edla; "do not often see Otto—that would disturb Alarik. Make him happy, Adelaide; he is the best, the noblest being——" Her voice trembled. "And now, God bless thee, my sweet, my good, my happy sister!" said she, as she rose, bent over Adelaide, and kissed her; "God bless thee!" and she hastened away with her handkerchief at her eyes.

The following day the sun and the President rose brightly together. The cloud which threatened to come up, was blown away by the west-wind—good humour. At breakfast the bouillon was as salt as brine; but the President swallowed it in silence, and when Edla expressed her regret that her father should take that salt soup, he said:

"A very good, very strong soup, my child! a little—perhaps a little too salt, but it is stomachic; I think it will agree with me very well."

The President's goodness made the soup taste yet saltier to Edla, and I am sure that Marie received a serious warning to take care another time.

Immediately after breakfast the President and his daughter set out in the best humour in the world. He had the same morning given me a considerable sum for the purchase of books for Edla, and the setting up of book-shelves in her room during her absence. I made no scruple of immediately whispering something of the surprise to Edla, who heard me with tears in her eyes both of joy and gratitude.

When after their departure I went to my room, I found on my toilet-table a sealed packet addressed to me in Edla's hand. I broke it open, and read the following words written on a loose sheet:

"I have given you unquiet; I would wish to be able to give you some joy. See in my soul the thoughts which

lately have begun to arrange themselves there. I know this will be the best thanks for all your pains."

The packet contained several sheets on which Edla had written her feelings and thoughts. These remarks appeared under a variety of dates, and showed me the continuing development of her soul. I shall here produce some of them.

"I; must fully and finally divide myself from the life of the world, not exteriorly, but interiorly. Oh! it is heavy, indescribably heavy, to eat the bread of the world's charity. I am proud enough rather to starve without it, than to beg for it; but I must not even require it, not hunger after it. I must find another bread,—I must be sufficient to myself—

"To know oneself—one's natural disposition, one's power—to know what one desires—to desire it uninterruptedly, provided it is good, and for the winning of one's object, to direct one's striving, to arrange one's time and one's occupation for every day and every moment; these are the conditions for the enjoyment of oneself and the gift of life, nay, even for the attainment of the esteem and friendship of one's fellow-creatures, the conditions, in fact, by which we are able calmly to dispense with them, when they are denied us by an unkind fate.

"I did not think, I did not feel so before! I have considered as the greatest and only happiness, to please, to be admired, to be loved. I could have desired to have bought this lot at the expense of my own self-respect, or the happiness of others. I desire it no longer. That time is past, thank God, passed for ever! I no longer desire first of all the applause and love of my fellow-creatures, I desire to have clearness and certainty in my own spirit; I will have harmony with myself—peace with God—with his voice in me, my conscience!

"I rather conceive that I yet fully feel in myself the blessedness of that state, in which one uses the world as not abusing it; when one bears with the world and its children patiently and easily, and turns from them to one's solitary room, to one's own heart; and finds oneself undisturbed, and continues in freedom and clearness to work in one's own calling, and according to the plan once laid down for one's life. Is not this already upon earth a state of true liberty

and happiness? O God grant, God grant, that I could arrive at this! God grant that every being in my situation might reach this quiet and secure haven! I shall at least not cease to hope, to pray, and to labour.

“Were I only good—were I only very good, then everything would be easier, and I happier. Why is Adelaide so happy? Not only because she is so beautiful, and so loved, but chiefly because she is so good. She has peace in her heart, peace with the whole world; she does not know what bitterness, what enmity, what murmuring, mean! Were I only good! My God make me good!

“Resignation! O he who could fully seize thy quiet and strengthening life! Resignation, that is, subdued renunciation. Is it not the fate of almost all people to be forced to forsake something, if they would gain something? But the portion of renunciation of some is great. To forsake is the law—submission is the Gospel. The latter makes the former easy, sometimes pleasant. Pure resignation raises and lightens life. Thou angel, whose wings I already seem to feel, hover over my cross, and teach me to pray: ‘My God, thy will be done!’

“Oh! but it is yet beautiful to live, to have been created, if even it is but to look into God’s creation—to think of it!

“And when the thoughts become clearer, when they link themselves harmoniously to each other, then they begin to beam, then they enliven the heart, then they enlighten the way.

“It is good to read of the great hearts, which beat, which bled for eternal truths. One feels beside these oceans of strength and love, such a drop, such a little drop! To feel ourselves humble is good. If the drop suffer—what does it signify in the great whole? Nations bleed to death, the life of the hero consumes in fetters; drop—repine not!

“And Thou great and good Master of life, Thou eternal, Thou necessary Will, which rules over the world of circumstances, and sooner or later equals the unequal, let the law of Thy eternal goodness work, and give every virtue its temple, every power its sceptre—it is with my thoughts incessantly fixed upon Thee that I will look into life and its mysteries. Should all darken to my glance, should I faint as I sink down in the whirling stream of circumstances—on Thee will I keep my hold.

“I had been told—Adore God in nature! I sought Him there, the All-wise, the All-good—I found Him not. I sought Him in human life—and asked disconsolately, ‘Where is my God?’ I sought Him in the doctrine of reconciliation—I have found Him—and now first do understand his words in the life of nature and humanity. Sun and flowers, goodness and genius, ye beams of His life! with all my heart I can now love and admire you.

“Admiration! rich well-spring of enjoyment! why art thou not more sought after? Thy pure veins will never run dry for the thirsty; to-day on the little earth he can be refreshed by thee; through thousands and thousands of years in a higher development of God’s infinite creations, he shall drink of thee, ever young and ever fresh. The enjoyment which thou givest is pure, and followed by no pain. Happy he who learns to admire the admirable!

“My thoughts clear themselves in a way which gives me much pleasure. Conceptions and things arrange themselves in order.

“It is certainly want of discernment which causes the disorder and crookedness which one sees in the life of man, and hears in his judgments. Education should form people to their own discernment. One does not learn to contemplate and distinguish things, without also learning to contemplate and judge oneself. So abortive is human life, so many human caricatures probably only originate in this, that we have not learnt to know our own genius, or the eternal thought of the Creator, which we are called to express in life, and which constitutes our essential individuality. We do not understand ourselves; we float on into unfamiliar spheres, we imitate others, and forget to be like ourselves, lose our own power and our real originality. What an unsuccessful being would he be who would seek to imitate Adelaide; what an equally unsuccessful who would seek to philosophise without head? Let each remain in his own truth. Each truth has a lie to reduce to silence.

“And what?—enjoyment, joy—they are no longer strange names to me? How swiftly does the day pass, how fresh is my mind in the evening, how happy the thought that I am richer than yesterday, how light the glance cast on to-morrow!

O these peaceful conquests in the world of thought, how full of blessing are they not!

"I feel that I am on a way which is in harmony with my natural disposition and my taste. I feel that myself advances with each day; it makes me happy. I become clearer with myself and with others, it makes me milder and better.

"O my father! thou lovest me then! I shall make thee happy, my father. Blessed be thy tears! blessed this day!

"Yes, my God! yes, my good guiding friend! and thou unknown and now discovered benefactor! I believe it, I know it by the calm and the strength in my bosom. I shall become good, I shall become happy; and certainly yet thank God for that suffering which conducted me on the right way to my real happiness."

Thus Edla, and thus probably many others whom misfortune and sufferings have stricken in youth. They were like one dead, and behold! it was only a trial, a call to higher life! I had taken a pen to correct some mistakes in Edla's lines, to place some forgotten dots on *â's* and *î's*, as well as to cross one or other *t*, and afterwards allowed my goose-quill to travel in the following unequal lines, which were called forth by my meditations on Edla, and many of her kindred:

THE SNOW-FLAKE IN SPRING; OR, THE SORROWS
OF YOUTH.

A May-day came, but slow her tread,
The wind blew from the north,
The heaven hung over all like lead,
When lo! from its grey cloud-land shed,
A snow-flake fell to earth.

But the sun beamed in glory through,
And loosed the power of frost,
A dazzling pearl the snow-flake grew,
Looked upwards to the sky's deep blue,
Then in the earth was lost.

Waked by heaven's tears, a seed began
To live; in rapid birth
To leaf, to stalk advancing ran,
And stood one morning, sweetly wan,
The fairest flower on earth.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.

Madame to-day will take a grand flight,
And a host of guests by card invite.

MRS. LENNGREN.

SOON after her father's departure, Countess Augusta came out to us. She desired, as she said, to assist Adelaide in getting her things ready. I was not greatly pleased with this, for I had wished to pass this time alone with my beloved Adelaide and my little ones. But Countess Augusta made herself so companionable, and friendly, and industrious, that I gradually became quite reconciled to her company. She had acquirements; she did not speak much, but she could speak interestingly on many subjects; and with such capabilities, it is not very difficult in the long run for people to make themselves esteemed and liked.

After Count Alarik was gone, the Baroness and young Otto showed themselves oftener; Adelaide was always friendly with them, and was glad when they came. Adelaide loved them; her heart was so affectionate, that all who showed her tenderness became dear to her.

Our life in this couple of months passed agreeably, but so uniformly, that to give a short account of it, I think I could not do better than employ the model I once found in a certain young lady's journal:

- July 1. Walking; reading; work; conversation.
 2. Ditto Ditto Ditto Ditto
 3. Ditto Ditto Ditto Ditto
 4. Ditto Ditto Ditto Ditto
 5. Ditto Ditto Ditto Ditto
 6. Ditto Ditto Ditto Ditto
 7. Ditto Ditto. The clergyman was here

on a visit.

And so on week after week. But long live *gay* uniformity, which makes the days pass swiftly, and keeps the body and soul in courage and activity!

Imperceptibly the time approached for Count Alarik's return. Adelaide anticipated it with delight, and many times in the day stretched out her arms as if to receive him, and named his name in the softest and tenderest tone.

Another day was also approaching—namely, Baron G.'s

birthday ; and the Baroness and Otto overwhelmed Adelaide with entreaties to take a part in a little piece which was to be represented on that memorable day, and which was to surprise his Excellency, and to edify and delight the whole neighbourhood both far and near. I counselled Adelaide not to consent, for I feared that Count Alarik might take it very ill ; but Adelaide thought it would be so unkind, so impossible to say no. She said, "I have grieved them so much, how can I refuse to do them this little pleasure, when it can so easily be done ?"

She was, besides, so certain of soon making her betrothed again satisfied and contented that I finally ceased speaking, though I saw her really with heartfelt anxiety conducted away by the Baroness. The little ones had unluckily taken it into their heads to catch the ague, which prevented me from accompanying Adelaide, and watching over her. Countess Augusta remained with me, to help me in the care of the children, as she said. I never rightly knew how to believe her. Count Alarik had fixed his return for the last days of August, that is to say about ten days after the one on which Adelaide was carried off by the Baroness. The piece which was to be performed was called "The Unbidden Guest." His Excellency, who was to be surprised with it, as well as with seventy bidden guests, was so polite that he seemed to be deaf to all the nailing and hammering within the house when the theatre was to be set up, and blind to everything which was going on around him ; he seemed not in the least to conceive that anything unusual was on foot ; nay, he was so delicate and so amiable that when for the benefit of the piece his star and his dressing-gown were secretly taken from him, he informed his family that he had certainly lost them. While every one was labouring to surprise him, he on his side amused himself with surprising the trouts in a little alder-shaded stream, and by the aid of his enchanted wand in speedily transferring the poor little unfortunates from the water to dry land.

The Baroness was the happiest and busiest being in the world : she ordered about the ices and coulisses, the dresses and the lamps ; she mediated incessantly between the contending actors, which was certainly no easy matter ; for while amongst friends and acquaintances the parts were offered and accepted, it was sometimes found that the daughter in the piece was to

have five mothers, and ere one knew where one was, there were eight daughters and no mother. "Her Grace" became the chambermaid, and the chambermaid became her Grace, and so on. Otto kept firm hold of the lover's *rôle*, but he had endless difficulty in learning it by heart. Morning, mid-day, and evening, he was heard to repeat it, and every morning after he had said "O Heavens! what do I see!" he was obliged to stop to look into the book for what he really ought to see; and every evening when after the declaration with much warmth he had exclaimed, "Heavenly Julia! stop and hear me!" he came to a stop himself. He was, however, so unwearying in courage and good-humour, so earnest, and besides that so obstinate, that no one thought of contesting the part with him. The inconsiderate Adelaide agreed, though after a long hesitation to play the heroine's part examined Otto in his, and laughed heartily with him at his forgetfulness and mistakes.

The great day came! The actors were dressed; the guests collected; the lights lighted. The orchestra played Rossini, the curtain went up. His Excellency said, "Ah!"

Who was beautiful; who was a charming heroine; who enchanted all eyes and hearts, if not Adelaide?

Who was enchanted, and who was at a loss, if not Otto? Who helped him; who was of great use, though hidden and forgotten, now as often, if not the prompter? We have got into the way of relating by questions, let us then proceed by the same. Who is this with the pale, severe features, who glides silently amongst the spectators, conceals himself at the furthest extremity of the hall, and does not turn his dark eye from the form of Adelaide beaming with youth and beauty? What makes Adelaide's acting become at once so uncertain—what makes her eye wander anxiously, piercingly amongst the spectators, as if something had flitted past and disappeared?

The moment for the declaration had arrived. Otto exclaimed—"Heavenly Julia, stop and hear me!"

But Julia heard no more; her beaming glance was immovably fixed on some object at the bottom of the hall. Without apology she sprang from the astonished Otto, and into the side scene. Transported with joy and delight, Adelaide here opened her arms to him who came towards her;

but it was a cold hand which seized hers, it was a severe though beloved voice which reminded her to return to the theatre and play out her part. Adelaide, surprised and terrified, swallowed her tears and went. The play was soon finished, but another soon commenced. It was not Leonora, who was carried away by her lover's ghost in the night to a yet darker home, but something not unlike it; for when Adelaide went off the scene, she was seized by the same ice-cold hand as before, a cloak was wrapped round her, and she was hurried into a carriage; and the carriage, drawn by fiery horses, was carried away with the swiftness of the wind. Adelaide said not a word, made not a sign of resistance; but when the storm howled around the coach, and the rain beat on the windows, and the black night was round about, and the tall form at her side sate in the flickering lamplight as pale as a ghost, and immovable and silent, then she felt as if her heart would break; and what love has of tenderness, what contrition has of touching smiles, and prayers, and tears, she poured out over the image at her side. But all in vain! Count Alarik only looked at her with a piercing glance, but did not speak. Finally, Adelaide lost courage; her heart drew itself together; her tongue became powerless; her cheeks grew pale; she became silent; and long was that night-journey for her and for him.

Silently as he had borne her into the carriage, Count Alarik bore her out of the same, and delivered her to me, who came towards them. For himself, he asked to speak with Countess Augusta. Adelaide was in the beginning perfectly dumb with grief and astonishment; but my tenderness and my questions soon brought her back to herself, and she gave vent to her tears and her despair.

"Ah! if he but stormed," said she, "if he reproached me ever so harshly and so violently, it would be sweet to me in comparison with this coldness, this silence—this kills me."

What Countess Augusta said to Count Alarik, I do not know; but it is certain that he came from her in a milder frame of mind. I also spoke to him to excuse Adelaide; he heard me politely but coldly; I could perceive that he mistrusted me—that he was displeased with me; and, to say truth, I was so with him. Instead of frankly speaking to Adelaide, to reproach her for her thoughtlessness or inconsiderateness—

if he would give her youthful fault so severe a name—instead of afterwards forgivingly and affectionately clasping her to his bosom, which she had so well deserved, he made a half reconciliation with her, in a kind of fatherly manner; and God forgive me! but I think that he had very little of a fatherly feeling just at that moment. He represented to her, with a sort of stiff gentleness, the imprudence of playing the heroine's rôle with a young man whose love to her was known to the whole neighbourhood as well as to herself.

Adelaide agreed to all; but Count Alarik's show of reasonableness and evident coldness during all this, laid upon her young warm heart a restraint hitherto foreign to it; she became embarrassed and afraid. I was angry with Count Alarik, and began more and more to fear that he was anything but the perfect man I had before thought to see in him. I was angry with him, for he was the first who had disturbed Adelaide's beautiful and amiable confidence; it was he who taught her to know painful fear and anxiety. The sinner! How could he avoid reading her innocence, her love, in her eyes—in her whole manner? How? Yes, because he was himself weak, because he was burningly jealous. Besides, I doubt that he was afraid of compromising his own worth, by showing a love which he feared was not fully returned; perhaps he thought himself too good to love Adelaide. I was very angry with Count Alarik.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CRISIS.

A bitter heart seeks to do hurt; but a terrible angel shall come over him.

Proverb.

THE constrained position in which Adelaide and her betrothed found themselves, became every day more painful, and it was evident it must soon come to some rupture. Adelaide was tender but uneasy; her eyes sought his, but they were often blinded with tears. He, on the contrary, was cold, sometimes even to harshness, towards her; his glances revealed mistrust; his words were bitter; this was often followed by impassioned bursts of love, which frightened even Adelaide herself. It was beautiful to see how she then quieted him, how she with an angel's voice spoke the gentlest words to him, and transported to the Swedish tongue all the

Italian's richness of appellations for a beloved one. It was beautiful to see how the uneasy and unquiet agitation of his mind gradually calmed itself. He would sit whole hours at her feet, sunning himself in her eyes, which beamed with goodness and love—and his eye saw peace in hers, and a calm spread itself over his noble forehead. She played with the locks of his hair, she sung the most melodious songs to him; and lulled by pleasurable and happy feelings, he leant his head against her knee, and many times the tears ran down his manly cheeks. When Adelaide saw them fall, she wiped them away with the gentlest reproaches, and life was again harmonious and light to them both. After such moments Adelaide gave herself anew up to all her inborn gaiety; she laughed, sung, and played with all who surrounded her, until a severe glance of Count Alarik, a sudden chill in his manners, again smothered her innocent joy.

Countess Augusta often spoke alone with Count Alarik; this gave me unspeakable disquiet. One evening when the lovers seemed for a moment to have forgotten the whole world, to feel only that they belonged to each other, when they stood in each other's arms, beautiful and blest—then I caught in Countess Augusta's dark eye a glance, only a hasty glance—for she rose at the same time hurriedly and left the room—but it was an expression made me shudder. Envy, hatred, despair, lay in that glance; it resembled a murderous arrow. A dark suspicion now raised itself in my mind, and I determined narrowly to watch her movements.

I went out to prepare tea, and occupied myself while so doing in implanting in the little ones' brains, that tea grew in China, that it was the leaf of a bush, and so on; when Countess Augusta came and seated herself beside me, sent away the children on some pretext, and while her trembling hand played with the tea-strainer, said in a half-audible voice:

“Mamselle Rönquist,” said she, “cannot imagine how the sight of two happy lovers painfully excites my feelings;—what a heart-breaking memory such a sight awakes in me. I feel again all the happiness which I once possessed, to feel at the same time what I have lost—lost for ever. I could become mad at such a moment, and I hasten away to avoid a sight which kills me!”

The probability of this explanation ; the easy manner in which it was given ; the expression of bitter pain painted in her young and beautiful countenance ; the tears which ran over her cheeks, all caused me in my heart to make a silent prayer for pardon in expiation of the suspicions I had just formed. This then was the cause that her tenderness for Adelaide, and her industry with her bridal equipment, seemed to increase as the important day was approaching. She asked that Adelaide should move into her room, at least during the night, giving for a reason that the thunder, which we now had almost every night, strongly affected her nerves, and deprived her of sleep ; but she could not endure to have any one with her, excepting "that good angel Adelaide!"

As Adelaide agreed, I could not object ; but it was a grief to me to lose the neighbourhood of my darling, no longer to be the silent witness of her life of love, which, when all was quiet and reposing in the stilly night, so often expressed itself in prayers for her beloved, in expressions of the most heartfelt gratitude to the Omnipotent origin of all pure love and bliss.

I soon remarked with uneasiness that Adelaide's gaiety evidently decreased from the day she removed to Countess Augusta's, who inhabited one wing of the house, while I with the children occupied the other—and extraordinary enough, her affection for her sister seemed daily to increase.

The Count seemed also oftener to seek the society of Countess Augusta than that of Adelaide ; on the latter he often cast glances which I could not explain to myself—so flaming, and yet so dark. I sought an explanation from Adelaide, but she avoided me ; Count Alarik did the same, and with more evident coldness, whenever I wished to open the anxiety of my heart to him—and the little ones were continually ailing, and required care and enlivening, gruel and barley-sugar, so that I was forced to leave the unquiet three to themselves, and could do nought but pray God to govern all to the best. This was an uneasy time, and some of the President's relations who came to pay us a few weeks' visit, were at this moment welcome as a distraction ; but that such should at such a time be requisite portended nothing good.

Not to interrupt the order of my relation, I will here play the part of a *clairvoyante*, and one after the other represent the scenes as they in reality took place, which were first related to me long after they had passed. Let then the curtain be drawn up for the reader, and Countess Augusta appear!

"I am your friend, Alarik!" she would say to him in the long conversations which she often had with him; "your friend, in the deepest, most intimate sense of the word. Your well-being, your happiness, is my most lively desire upon earth. O what would I not give that Adelaide were fully worthy of you! I will not hasten my judgment—but Adelaide's flightiness—her boundless desire for pomp and pleasure, which she now conceals for your sake—her friendship for Otto; his love, his riches—her conduct towards him during your absence—all cause me to doubt. Notwithstanding I am certain that Adelaide loves you, as well as she *can* love; but she is so volatile! What? you would speak openly to Adelaide? Let her only receive a suspicion of your doubts and your uneasiness—and she would give you assurances of her eternal love, which would dissipate all your doubts for the moment;—but how speedily will not this transient flame burn out? Let us hurry nothing, be quiet—show yourself calm with Adelaide, be attentive to her life and manners, and you will soon be able to see if she can make you happy, if you are enough for her, if she understands how to love you!"

"It is natural," she said another time, when Count Alarik, excited and impatient, wanted to burst the fetters of doubt which she had succeeded in binding round his soul—"it is natural that this constraint, this situation of things between you and her whom you so tenderly love, should seem insupportable to you. Go then, Alarik, your sisterly friend will not lay a restraint upon you, she only desires to warn you—go to your beloved, reveal your anxiety, your pain—receive her vows and her tears, and go afterwards to unite that holy bond which death alone can loose—O God! Alarik—will it establish or destroy your happiness?"

Count Alarik, uneasy and tormented, expressed his desire to speak to me of Adelaide.

"Mamselle Rönquist!" interrupted the astonished Coun-

tess; "Mamselle Rönquist—a fond fool,* who has no thought or conviction of her own, who believes blindfold all that Adelaide says to her; who, if Adelaide in an excited moment should protest that she cannot live without you, would find it a marvel that you should not believe it, even if on the following day you should find her in Otto's arms!"

"You, Alarik!" whispered she on another occasion, "you are not a man to allow yourself to be blinded by passion, who would wish to purchase some moments of pleasure with the loss of a whole life's clear and reflected bliss. You stand quiet, and look over the strife in your own, as well as in others' breasts, and calmly allow folly and anger to pass before you judge. You are not the slave of accidents—of others' power, nor even of your own heart—O my friend, how I admire you, and how few are like you! And this painful disquiet will even soon cease. I myself have daily an opportunity of looking nearer into Adelaide's soul; you will soon have the light, the certainty you desire—and even were this certainty painful—I know you—you are not the one to turn away your glance—calm, even in the midst of suffering, you will look truth in the face—you are a man!"

There is in men an inconceivably weak side towards flattery, particularly the sort of flattery which extols their independence and superior wisdom; and they so easily become bound, exactly because they consider themselves so free.

Count Alarik was a noble and strong-minded man, I repeat it in this moment when the reader must find him very weak. But is he the first and only noble and powerful nature who has had a weak and vulnerable side; who by an artful syren tongue has been seduced from the tender and faithful bosom which breathed alone for him?

We will now see the Countess alone with Adelaide.

In the evenings when they had gone to their room, the former more than once began to weep and lament herself bitterly. She said that she was the most unfortunate being in the world, that she hoped she might soon die. She did not express herself more clearly. Adelaide sought in vain, with prayers, caresses, and sympathising tears, to force her to reveal the cause of her sorrow, or soften its expression. Countess Augusta answered only with tears; and these

* Infinitely obliged, gracious Countess!

scenes, renewed many times in the course of the night, disturbed both the sleep and peace of mind of my poor Adelaide. Countess Augusta swore her to silence, begged her, unless she desired her sister's eternal misfortune, not to speak of her sorrow and suffering to any creature in the world, and last of all to Alarik; she exacted Adelaide's oath on this, and Adelaide gave it weeping.

One evening Countess Augusta was calmer than usual. She joked gaily with Adelaide, who on the contrary that evening was uneasy, sad, and silent. She took out her jewels, pearls, and precious ornaments of all kinds, and decorated Adelaide's hair, neck, and arms with them, and conducting her to the looking-glass, said:

"Look how beautiful you are! how dazzlingly beautiful! You would enchant the whole world!"

Adelaide stood before the mirror, contemplating herself, and really dazzled by her own beauty. Involuntary smiles began to beam over her face, rivalling the very diamonds.

"See!" exclaimed Countess Augusta, "how well this princely costume suits you! What a pity that no one in future will see you so—that you will never be able to wear jewels!"

Adelaide turned herself hastily from the glass. "Take them away! take them away!" she cried, blushing deeply—"he would not like it!"

"He? who?" asked Countess Augusta.

"Alarik!" answered Adelaide; and she tore off the precious ornaments with as much haste as if they had wounded her. She collected them in her hands, and said, smiling gaily: "See, Augusta! all this would I willingly give for a glance of his!"

The Countess took back her treasures, and laid them without saying a word into their cases. This was followed by a burst of grief, more violent than any of the former. She seemed to be near despair. Beside herself with alarm and distress, Adelaide fell on her knees, and weeping embraced her sister's. "Tell me!" she exclaimed, "O tell me, Augusta, why you suffer so deeply! tell me in what manner I can help you! I will do all, all for you!"

"All!" repeated Countess Augusta—and looked at her sister with an incredulous and sorrowful glance.

"Yes, all!" repeated Adelaide, "all which Alarik does not object to."

"And if it was so—— Ah God! I, the miserable—— Alarik! beloved Alarik!——"

Adelaide looked at her sister in dumb astonishment.

"I love him, Adelaide, I adore him! and he is yours—see there the cause of my secret sorrow, my despair and my death. I will not survive the day which for ever unites him with you. And well for me when this heart shall cease to bleed, when it shall cease its long, long struggle. Leave me, Adelaide—leave me, you cannot help me—you cannot, you will not give him to me!"

"And how should I," said the pale and trembling Adelaide, "be able to give him to you? Is it not his happiness, his well-being, which is put in question? Does he not love me!——"

"And if——Adelaide! if his choice could yet be free, if his happiness could yet be assured——"

Adelaide looked at her sister amazed and questioning; who, seating herself beside her, continued with cruel confidence:

"Tell me, Adelaide, do you think that Alarik is a man who alone seeks after personal beauty in a woman? Do you not think that in his wife he also requires a companion, a friend, who partakes his lofty thoughts, his exalted views of life and things; who loves what he loves; lives for what he lives; who is the confidant of the deepest feelings of his soul; who is all for him, as he is all for her? Or is my conviction of the sort of happiness Alarik seeks groundless? Is it but a dream?"

Adelaide started; she did not answer, but paleness and redness alternated on her cheeks; she breathed quick and deep.

"Do you think," continued Countess Augusta, "that you possess all that can make Alarik happy—you, who cannot enter into his enjoyments, who cannot understand his aspirations? Pardon me, Adelaide, I do not wish to hurt you; I only wish to show you a truth which you could not much longer conceal from yourself—you are not enough for Alarik."

Adelaide felt herself astounded. She grew quite pale, she clasped her hands to her bosom, and large heavy drops fell from her eyes.

"No, Adelaide, you are not enough for him; your beauty and your love yet attach him, but you must yourself feel that every day that bond is growing weaker. Day by day he becomes more aware that he cannot be happy with you, that you cannot fill what his great soul requires—day by day he withdraws himself more and more——"

"He loves me! he loves me yet!" cried Adelaide with violent emotion.

"His tenderness—his sorrowful tenderness—bear witness that he pities you; his increasing coldness, his disquiet, that he wishes to be released from you——"

"Released from me!" repeated Adelaide, and her head rose proudly, and her breast swelled as some degree of anger shone in her tearful eye—"from the first moment of such a desire in his breast is he free! But," and here at once all anger was extinguished, and bitter tears flowed afresh—"why do you speak so, Augusta, why do you torment me so cruelly? You cannot know his thoughts—you cannot——"

"And if I should know, however? If I could now show you certain proofs that I know his thoughts and his desires—O Adelaide, foolish Adelaide! are other proofs required than those he daily gives us? To whom does Alarik turn when his soul is full of high and noble thoughts, when he requires to express himself and to be understood? To whom does he turn when his heart is oppressed, to whom when he leaves you in anger—to whom, Adelaide?"

"Give me other proofs—I require yet to have, I will see other, more proofs!" cried Adelaide, beside herself.

"Even these can be found, and could be shown," continued her sister with terrible coldness, as she loosened a hair chain which hung round her neck, and showed a little gold medallion: she pressed a spring, it opened, and Adelaide saw the portrait of her betrothed—another, and she recognised a lock of his hair!

"Do you know this portrait?" asked Countess Augusta; "do you know this hair?—No, do not stretch your hand after it; it is not yours, it is mine! Alarik gave it to me as a remembrance of him, as a proof of——" she did not end.

Adelaide drew in her breath, started up, and wildly clasping her hands, exclaimed: "Is it possible? My God, is it possible?"

“And why?” asked Countess Augusta with a scornful smile—“why should it be so impossible, so unnatural? Alarik knows that he and I sympathise in all, that our souls really form but one.—Adelaide, hear me, and judge betwixt us, and judge him. I was Count Alarik’s first love; he loved me before he loved you. It was generally known in the world, it was spoken of everywhere; an engagement between us was considered as good as completed; even I thought so, for I loved him, and his small fortune was rather for than against him in my eyes. Then, Adelaide, then you stepped between us; your beauty dazzled Alarik—he became, as it were, bewitched by you; but you never fully possessed his affections—you never could possess them! Now Alarik feels this; now, when the enchantment is gradually ceasing, now he looks with regret back to me: he feels that heaven formed us for one another; that with me alone he can find that durable, that noble happiness which he seeks in life;—is it then wonderful that he should lament the spell which attracted his attention to another, the weakness which has made him a slave for life? Your self-love, Adelaide, your presumption——”

“Have I been presumptuous, Augusta?”

“Yes, that you have.”

“Then may God forgive me!”

“Have you ever doubted but that every one must love you; that your will must be a law for all? Have you ever been desirous of directing yourself according to the wishes of others, or to live for the sake of others? Have you not received the love which was offered you as a tribute due to your beauty, to your loveliness, not with a Christian’s humble gratitude? Do you not, even in this moment, find it quite natural that the noble Alarik should worship you with all your faults? Is not this presumption—is it not bold, unheard-of presumption?”

“You are hard, Augusta. If I have been presumptuous, O! I am sorely punished.”

“All is not your fault in Alarik’s change of mind, Adelaide. Chance even is against you. You are poor, Adelaide—I am rich. Alarik is no enthusiast; he is a prudent man; he feels that he is not formed to shut himself up in a narrow house, amongst children, weaving-looms, and all sorts of

homelinesses ; he feels that he is formed for a wider circle of activity ; that he is formed to shine in the world, to enlighten it ; and he knows that I possess what would give him the power to widen his circle of activity, that I can furnish him with the means of attaining that which his ambitious soul strives after."

"Riches?" said Adelaide, with a tone of deep affliction, "riches, glory—O! could they ever give him more happiness than my tenderness, than my sincere love?"

"I too have tenderness, I too have love, Adelaide!" said the Countess, as she laid her hand on her sister's arm and pressed it hard. "O! none know how I have loved him—and my love will end but with my life. If your tenderness, Adelaide, were enough for him, why is he not happy ; why does he torment both himself and you ; why does he seem to become more disquiet, more unhappy, the nearer the day of your union approaches? Be assured, Adelaide, that he would be glad to find a reason and opportunity to break off with you, to put an end to an engagement which suits him so little. It is only compassion for you which restrains him."

Adelaide wept violently. "I will speak to him," she cried ; "I will ask him if he no longer loves me ; and when I hear that word from his mouth, then he shall be free!"

"You will ask him, Adelaide? That he may deny the truth through compassion for you, and cast away his happiness for your sake. Is this noble, Adelaide?"

"I shall ask a friend what I ought to do ; I will speak with——"

"With Emma Rönnquist ; that she may speak to Alarik, and entreat him with prayers and tears to remain faithful to you. For you well know that she loves you beyond everything else in the world, and would willingly sacrifice every one's happiness for yours."

"My God, what shall I do!" exclaimed Adelaide in despair.

"Where now is your much praised goodness, Adelaide? where your clear understanding? You see, you know, that by one word, by one single courageous act of self-denial, you can make two beings happy—that man whom you say above all you love, and your sister ; you know it, Adelaide, and you

hesitate, and you will sacrifice them for your own happiness. And what happiness can indeed hereafter be yours, united to a man who does not love you, who only through necessity takes you for his wife? See, Adelaide! I have long concealed my love, long fought against it; I desired that you should be happy, and I—to die; but to-day I have clearly seen, that with my own happiness I should even sacrifice Alarik's; this certainty, this double grief, has snatched my secret from me. Pardon me, Adelaide, pardon the suffering I have caused you; I will be silent hereafter, and soon—soon shall death close these lips; for I know, Adelaide, what you have resolved within yourself—I know it!"

"No, you do not know it," said Adelaide, as she rose with proud self-command, her eye bright with sublime self-sacrifice. "But O!" and she looked at her sister with clasped hands, and an expression of indescribable anguish, "Augusta, can you make him happy?"

"Do you doubt it after all you have seen, after all I have said?—Good night, Adelaide."

"No: stop! pardon! but O! I did so love him!—there lay such a certainty here,"—and she laid her hand on her breast,—“such a certainty that I could make him happy, that no one else could do it like me, that I alone had the key to his heart, that he must eternally love me as I loved him, in spite of everything, in spite of all my faults; it was a certainty which I thought no one, and nothing in the world, could deprive me of; and yet now—how is it?” asked she in perplexity, as she passed her hand over her forehead, “is it gone? gone?” She took the locket which lay on the table, and asked, “Alarik gave you this?”

“Yes.”

“Augusta,” said Adelaide solemnly, but with a trembling voice, as she supported herself against the table, “Alarik shall be yours; I will not divide you. O how unworthy were I, could I hesitate between his happiness and mine; but—” and again she put her hand to her forehead, “that they are not one is what I cannot yet well understand. I know well that I was not worthy of him, that I never could become fully so; but oh! that he should judge me so unworthy! I am yet so young, I admired him so highly, I loved him so sincerely, and that he should so despise me!”

“Pay him back with the same, Adelaide. This pride well becomes a woman; despise him—reject him!”

“Never!” said Adelaide, as she made a movement of repulsion with her hand—“never! He may forsake me, and I shall still ever love him; he may despise me, and I shall still ever bless him. It cannot be otherwise, Augusta,” cried she, as her tears began to flow anew; “in my heart there is nothing but love towards him. Now, now in this moment, when I see the proof of his faithlessness towards me—of his contempt for my love—there is not a drop of bitterness in my heart towards him; now I would, as ever, willingly die for him. Ah! do not I do more; I forsake all my happiness, all the joy of my life, for his sake!”

“Noble-minded Adelaide!” cried Countess Augusta, and clasped her in her arms.

Adelaide sate silent and immovable.

“And now, Adelaide,” continued her sister, “be fully noble-minded. Take also the steps which will conduct to the object.”

“What shall I do?”

“Write early to-morrow morning a note to Aunt Ulla; ask her to come and take you for some days with her to R.”

“To R.! and what would Alarik think? Otto is there, you know.”

“I thought it had been your intention to restore Alarik his freedom,” said Countess Augusta drily.

“It is true—O, it is true! Yes, I will write; yes, I will go; and he shall have the opportunity which you say he seeks. And now leave me, Augusta; leave me, I require to be alone.”

“And if you repent, Adelaide?”

“I will not; but leave me now—go, go from me. Stop, Augusta! kiss me first! O! if you make him happy, I will willingly forgive you all the pain you have caused me. God bless you according as you make Alarik happy!”

The sisters separated to pass each a sleepless night.

Early on the following morning Countess Augusta forced her sister to write the note she had talked of. She herself wrote privately to Otto to the following effect:

“Courage, my dear Otto! What I long foresaw and expected has come to pass. Adelaide has grown tired of Alarik’s

continual discontent, as he of her thoughtlessness. The tie which still unites them is so weak, that it would break on the least stretch. Adelaide thinks of you with tenderness. Come to-day to B. Come with your mother, but go directly on your arrival down to the garden, to the arbour to the left; wait there. Be a man, Otto, and you will find her whom you love—a woman. But seem in the beginning to be in despair and inconsolable. Secrecy and punctuality!"

After she had written, she went out to despatch a messenger.

"Already up and out?" said Count Alarik, who, returning from one of his usual morning walks, met her on the staircase.

"This lovely morning has enticed me out, like you. I have passed a bad night; I required to feel the fresh, pure air."

"What is Adelaide doing?"

"I do not know—writing a note, I think. O Alarik! my fear is almost confirmed; Adelaide is but a weak and vain woman. Otto and his riches live more in her mind than you; and I suspect that only compassion, or perhaps fear for you, prevents her from openly confessing it. Last night she put on all my jewels——"

"Last night?"

"Yes, and stood long before the looking-glass, contemplating her really dazzling beauty with deep sighs."

Count Alarik leaned against one of the pillars of the balustrade, and cooled his burning forehead against it.

"Alarik, what are you thinking?" asked the Countess, after a silence.

"That I would I could give her jewels," he answered, smiling bitterly. "Yes," continued he lower, and as it were speaking to himself, "so weak am I, that I know nothing so painful as not to be able to give her jewels."

"Unfortunate Alarik!" sighed Countess Augusta. "Alarik, my friend, if it can make you happy, take mine, take them all;—what shall I do with them? Adorn a joyless bosom! Take them, let them be reset, and make Adelaide a——"

"Silence!" said Count Alarik angrily; "not a word more of this. Pardon, Augusta, but you know but little of me. Where is Adelaide?"

"In her room. Do not seek her now. I fear you would not be welcome. Be calm, be quiet, and wait yet awhile;

perhaps circumstances ere long will give us a certainty which can fix your actions."

"Yes, certainty, certainty," said Count Alarik with a low but meaning voice, "if even the worst! Only no longer this martyrdom, doubt."

"May it cease! May it cease, so that you may have happiness; and then even I shall have joy enough. In the mean time hear my prayer,—do not disturb Adelaide. Let us be quiet, but watchful. Something tells me that ere the day is past we shall have the certainty we seek."

She now left him to rejoin Adelaide, whom she found bathed in tears. Countess Augusta sought alternately with praise, alternately with reproaches, to excite in her sister another turn of mind. "These tears," said she, "these pale cheeks will betray you, and nullify the whole of your noble self-sacrifice. If your intention, Adelaide, is not merely an empty joke, for a couple of hours have courage and resolution; if you will not excite Alarik's compassion, and so lay a restraint on his freedom, wipe away your tears, call back the colour on your cheeks, give assurance to your manner—be fully an angel, Adelaide—give up wholly, and act powerfully, else you have done nothing for him you love!"

When Adelaide came out to breakfast, she was like a person in a fever. A wild, uncomfortable gaiety appeared in her manners, generally so agreeable, gay, and calm. She bid good morning hurriedly to all, seated herself at table far from Count Alarik, and drank her coffee with disquiet haste, while her bosom heaved violently. Count Alarik did not turn his glance from her; but it was no tender and anxious lover's glance, it was piercing and sharp. Occasionally a deep emotion showed itself in his features; but he overcame it, and remained calm. Adelaide's glance fell under that which was fixed upon her, and her trouble increased with every moment.

Now came the children running in, and throwing themselves as usual into Adelaide's arms. But they soon remarked her altered appearance, and overwhelmed her with questions—why her cheeks were so red, why did she look as if she had been crying?

Adelaide could support it no longer; she rose hastily and went out. Count Alarik rose also, and went to the window.

At this moment the noise of wheels was heard, and four snorting, fiery horses flew to the door with the Baron G——'s carriage. With secret but boiling bitterness Count Alarik saw the Baroness and her son alight. The latter, however, did not accompany his mother up-stairs, but went immediately into the garden. Count Alarik followed him with his eyes. The doors to the hall flew open, we heard the rustle of silk, and the Baroness entered. After having saluted us all with her usual kind friendliness, she said :

"I hear I shall get my sweet Adelaide home with me to-day. The darling girl has herself written to me about it, and I have now come quite proud, and quite happy, to carry her off with me ;—but where is my angel ?"

"I shall tell her that you are here, aunt ?" said Countess Augusta, and went out, but cast a glance on Count Alarik.

She found Adelaide in a state of the most violent emotion.

"I know what you have to say, Augusta!" cried she. "I know who is here, know what you desire ; but I cannot now—I cannot now go to them, not before every one's eyes to defy him and his will,—my knees cannot support me ;—I feel as if my soul would leave me——"

"Adelaide, dear Adelaide ! for heaven's sake calm yourself—you shall not go unless you please ; everything depends on yourself. No one forces you. Calm yourself, come with me to the garden—you know we can go out at the back door, and reach it without being seen from the windows. The fresh air will do you good, and the decisive moment be delayed ; you will gain time to think over it, and determine yourself."

Adelaide permitted Countess Augusta to guide her. They had not gone far in one of the arched walks of the garden, when Otto sprang out, and threw himself at Adelaide's feet. Adelaide gave him a glance of surprise and wrath, and tried to return ; but he embraced her knees, and held her where she was.

"O cousin Adelaide, cousin Adelaide!" cried Otto, "hear me only this once—I must speak to you ; what have I done that you should so cruelly hate me ?"

"I do not hate you, Otto ;—but leave, let me go, I beg you, I will have it so !"

“Hear me only this single time, this last time! afterwards I will fly for ever—I will go—go to the world’s end——”

“Hear him!” whispered Countess Augusta, “it is a pity for him, he loves you so tenderly—hear him, and so you will easier get off with his assiduity; I will go a little aside, and take care that no one comes to disturb us.”

She retired with these words, and hurried out of the garden. In the court she met Count Alarik.

“Where is Adelaide?” he asked hurriedly.

“In the garden, in the arbour to the left——O my suspicion! Unfortunate Alarik!”

She hurried away, and Count Alarik with glowing cheeks darted on the path she had shown him.

Adelaide had allowed Otto to conduct her into the arbour, and sitting on a bench, she heard the outpourings of his childish but sincere love. There was no hardness in Adelaide’s heart. Her natural goodness, her friendship for her young relation, the feeling of her own bitter suffering, made her in this moment very weak. She told him that she could not love him, that she loved Alarik alone in the world; but meanwhile she permitted him, lying on his knees before her, to cover one of her hands with kisses and tears, while with the other she stroked his rich golden curls, and never yet had Otto felt himself so happy. “My good Otto!” said Adelaide’s gentle voice; but it was quickly silenced, for before her stood Count Alarik, with a thousand demons in his glance.

A cry of affright and horror burst from Adelaide’s bosom. She pushed Otto from her, and wild and unconscious of what she was doing, sprang from the garden into the house, and into the gallery where I was then sitting alone. In a few minutes, however, she seemed to come to herself, and with a calm, as if she had resolved courageously to meet the worst, she sat silent and deadly pale, with her eyes sunk, while her heavy and oppressed breathing alone bore witness to the disquiet of her breast. Full of anguish, I asked her the cause of her emotion.

“Do not ask me now!” she answered laconically; “soon, soon all shall be told!”

I now heard some one with slow, and as it were unwilling, steps approach the door of the gallery. Adelaide rose up,

and began to tremble violently, and her face was as colourless as the marble urn against which she was obliged to support herself. A hand seized the lock, but paused in turning it; finally the door slowly opened, and Count Alarik entered.

I shuddered at sight of him. There was a dreadful expression in his face. There was despair, there was judgment, there was determined, inevitable misfortune. He approached Adelaide slowly, and stopped a few steps from her. Adelaide became calmer, her trembling was less visible, she looked on him with a glance—a heaven of innocence and love lay in it; but it was forced to sink before the unalterable judgment which lay announced in his. She trembled again. In him the storm was mastered, but that it had been terrible might be read on his forehead and his pale lips.

“Adelaide!” said he, in a tone so sorrowful and so severe, that a deadly chill seized my heart on hearing it—“Adelaide”—he drew in his breath—“we part—we part for ever! I have long suspected that we were not suited for one another; you were not worthy of the love I bore to you. I feared it before, I know it now. Adelaide—I forgive, but I pity you!”

Again she cast up her pure glance; again it fell under his. He continued:

“The angel which lent you his shape enticed me, enchanted me. I thought——but it is past——past for ever——your frivolity, your culpable frivolity has parted us for ever. O that I could forget——”

He ceased, overcome by his violent emotions.

I could not endure to hear such language spoken to Adelaide, to see her in such a situation before him. With tears and clasped hands I approached her.

“Adelaide! why do you not speak? why do you not defend yourself? Are you not innocent, my own darling? You are innocent, you cannot deserve this.”

Adelaide did not answer, she stood immovable; I went nearer and tried to take her hand.

“Be quiet!” she said, and rejected me gently.

Count Alarik continued, with an emotion which he vainly sought to smother: “May you be happy, Adelaide! Adelaide, remember that life is short—that pleasures give a fleet-

ing enjoyment;—but why should I speak of this with you” —he added, with a contortion of features which was meant to resemble a smile. “I sought you only to tell you that you are free! Farewell!”

He turned away and went out. Adelaide followed him, apparently almost unconsciously. At the door she seized his hand and held him back, and looked up to him with an expression which seemed to say, “And is this really true? Is it possible that we are to part? Is this serious?”

He released his hand from hers, but stood still looking at her. She opened with a touching expression of faithful angelic love her arms to him. A demoniac expression flew over his face and contorted his noble features, violently he threw her back and disappeared. The action of his hand, still more the horror of such a moment, threw Adelaide on the marble floor. She lay still and pale as if she were dying, and only clasped her hands hard against her breast. I raised her up, carried her in my arms to her room; I wept over her, I spoke the tenderest words to her; all in vain, she remained silent, breathed quick and deep, and held her hands over her bosom, as if she sought by these means to deaden some severe pain.

I begged the Baroness to go in to Adelaide, and hastened to seek Count Alarik, to try if possible to bring him to his senses again, and receive some explanation of the extraordinary scene I had just witnessed.

When the Count had left Adelaide, he gave orders for his immediate departure, and in a few minutes his carriage was before the door.

Then Countess Augusta hurriedly and unannounced entered his room.

“I would say something to you, Alarik!” she said, and her cheeks glowed—“Alarik! when time has lightened your grief—when you have succeeded in forgetting an unworthy—then think—then remember that Augusta loves you, faithfully and warmly loves you!”

He looked at her in surprise, and a dim flame burned in his eye. She went nearer to him, and stretched out her hand to him.

“Augusta!” he said, putting her aside with gloomy se-

riousness, "I cannot even thank you. You can be nothing to me. My life's joy is gone—I have no more love to give. Farewell! Forget me!" And he withdrew hastily.

On the staircase I met him. I stopped him, and asked:

"In the name of God, tell me what has happened?"

He fixed his eyes on a little neck-kerchief belonging to Adelaide, which by accident I had taken on my arm with my shawl; he snatched it from me, and instead of answering my questions, hurried away, covering it with kisses. I now saw Countess Augusta with glowing cheeks come out of his room.

"What has happened?" I asked her. "What is the meaning of all this?"

"I scarcely know myself," she answered. "How is Adelaide?"

"Very bad! What was your ladyship doing here? What did Count Alarik say?"

"I cannot take upon myself to give account of his actions!" answered she angrily. At the same moment we heard a carriage roll away. Count Alarik was gone.

In the lobby I met young Otto in the most excited and angry mood. He asked my counsel on what he was to do. He was desperate with Count Alarik's having called him "boy!" and having acted most arrogantly towards him. In my hurry and anguish to return to Adelaide, I knew no better counsel to give him than this: "To return home and remain there!"

CHAPTER XIX.

LOVE UNTIL DEATH.

I sing, for I must die—and I would pour
Forth with my song my soul, from life and pain.
Farewell! I hasten to that happy shore,
Where with a clearer voice, more certain strain,
My life, my love, I yet shall sing again!—*Swan's Song.*

WHEN I returned to Adelaide, I found the Baroness sitting beside her busy instilling a quantity of morals and maxims into her, which I well know are capable of making one who is in good health sick, and which, therefore, according to the laws of homœopathy, should make a sick person well. But on my poor Adelaide they produced not the least effect.

She lay silent and immovable, and seemed to suffer. I made haste in the politest way to dismiss the Baroness ; afterwards I sat silent in Adelaide's room, occupied only with her, and thinking of the means of getting her to speak, or at least to weep. Ah ! it was the first pain which had reached that young tender heart. It was yet too little inured to suffering ; it threatened to be crushed beneath the burden.

From the state of death-like repose in which Adelaide lay till the afternoon, she passed to one of restless disquiet. She went from the one room to another, and seemed to seek something without herself knowing what. My uneasiness on her account was indescribable ; I sent for the doctor to the nearest town, and in the mean time followed Adelaide silently and faithfully as her shadow. After she had wandered through almost the whole house, she went out ; I let her go ; only threw a shawl over her shoulders, and followed her without saying a word. I was glad that she went out, and hoped that the movement and the fresh air would recal her to herself. She took the same way as Count Alarik had gone, and went faster and faster, until she almost ran. Afterwards she turned from the road, and continued irregularly, now walking, and now running, through a wild forest track. It was with difficulty that I could follow her, but her white dress, which fluttered amongst the trees, kept me on her track. For nearly an hour we continued this painful wandering. I wished to stop her, but she seemed to suspect my intention, and every time I approached her she fled from me with the rapidity of a dove. My cries and my prayers she seemed not to hear. All at once I saw her throw herself on the ground. I ran forward, and saw that she had thrown herself down to drink of a little running stream which gurgled out from amongst the heath and moss. At the same moment that I bent forward to prevent the serious danger of her drinking, I saw a clear stream of blood gush forward, and mingle itself with the waters of the brook. It came from my poor Adelaide's breast. A violent hemorrhage, which lasted several minutes, had taken place, during which I held her in my arms. She became senseless, and I was near despair.

It was late in the evening, and began to grow dark. We were in the middle of the wild forest, and not a trace of hu-

man dwelling was to be seen near us. Where should I turn with Adelaide,—where find help for her?

I had many times said to myself, that it was vain to cry to God for earthly help; for He cannot for the sake of one human being seize with His Almighty hand on the circumstances whose free play He has once permitted, and which he cannot now restrain without overturning the laws which he has written in nature. For many years, therefore, I had never offered up a prayer for anything temporal—but in this moment of anguish all these arguments were vain; I followed the heart's immediate instinct—I prayed—prayed to God a burning prayer for help for my beloved child. But all remained silent around us; the murmur of the crimsoned brook alone was heard, and the cross-bill beating down an occasional pine-cone which fell to the ground;—now and then a sound went through the wood, and the shepherd's horn was heard at a distance. Adelaide lay with closed eyes, silent, pale, and blood-stained; I thought that her last moments were come. I called aloud several times, but the echo alone answered me. Again I prayed silently and with tears, and a promise of delivery reached my ear. It was the tinkle of a little cow-bell, and the voice of her driver: "Get on my pet! see-so! Where are you going now? Will you only go right!" And an old woman presently stepped out of the bushes, and her cow, who stopped in alarm, lowed at the sight of us. I called to the scarcely less frightened woman; quickly told her what had happened, and prayed for help. Her cottage was not far off, and she assisted me in carrying Adelaide there. Adelaide's blood had ceased to flow, but she lay in a death-like swoon. The cow followed us gently snorting. About a hundred paces from the stream, just at the end of the wood, lay the little hut. We carried Adelaide into the narrow, dark, but clean place, and laid her upon the straw bed. After this the old woman went immediately to the house, to relate what had happened, and get the necessary assistance. I hoped that about this time the doctor would have arrived.

I remained alone in the hut with Adelaide, and the most painful feelings filled my heart. There lay my white swan, my darling, blood-stained upon the straw—so beautiful still—but perhaps near her death. Should I never more see

these eyes open, streaming with goodness and joy? This young life of song and love, had it already ceased for ever?

I sat and wept the bitterest tears over her, when she half opened her eyes, and said with a weak voice, "Give me something to drink."

I looked round the place; there was neither meat nor drink to be seen. I did not dare to leave Adelaide to go so far as to the stream, neither should I have dared to give her of its cold water to drink. I was in the greatest distress. At that moment the cow gently lowed outside the hut, and snorted with her nose against the window. Inexpressibly rejoiced, I seized the milk-pail standing in a corner of the room, ran out, and milked the cow, who permitted it quietly enough, considering the strange hand. I returned to Adelaide, poured the milk into a little cup, and held the mild beverage to her lips. She drank eagerly.

"Ah, that was excellent—that was very good!" she said, as I again let her head gently sink on the bed. She looked up, looked full and affectionately upon me, and extended me her hand. "It is better now," said she. "Do you know, it was terrible. Such a pain here," and she laid her hand on her bosom; "I was suffocating, but I could not die! But it is better now. Pardon me! I have certainly made you very anxious—pardon me!"

"Do not speak so," I entreated, covering her hand with kisses and tears of joy; "do not speak now; be calm and still, for God's sake, for my sake, for all their sakes who love you, and all shall yet be well."

She made an assenting motion with her head. An expression of pain spread itself over her features, and her tears began to flow. I was glad of this; she required this relief.

The hut which made our home for the present lay about a quarter of a mile* from the house, and an hour had nearly elapsed before people came thence to us. The deepest distress had been excited amongst them by what had happened. It was said that Countess Augusta, too, had been taken ill. The doctor had not yet come from the town. Adelaide seemed to be too weak to be removed. I feared that the motion would only bring on a new hemorrhage; and as she herself wished to pass the night quietly where she was, I

* About a mile and a half English.

resolved therefore to remain; sent after clothes and some medicines; desired that the doctor immediately on his arrival should be conducted to us, and only retained one maid-servant to pass the night with me beside Adelaide.

In the mean time I occupied myself in washing away the blood from Adelaide's face, neck, and hands, as well as giving her clean clothes. While I was doing it, she was quiet, kind, and contented.

Late in the evening, a message arrived that the doctor was absent from town when our messenger reached it; he could not therefore till the following day be expected. This made me very anxious; and after the servant and the maid had gone to sleep in the cow-house, I seated myself by Adelaide's bed, and remained quietly there through the night. Now and then I laid logs and sticks on the fire, whose kindly flame kept our little room light.

The night was stormy, and heavy showers were driven against the window; the owls were shrieking their shrill ominous cry; but the quieting medicines I had given to Adelaide had procured her a deep though restless sleep. Dark fantasies seemed to occupy her mind, as she threw her arms here and there.

"They are driving the wrong way with the hearse," she said; "show them here. In the church at O. there lie my mother and my little brother—there will I also lie; not in the vault. I will not lie there. No! lay me under God's free heaven—let the sun shine on my grave—let the flowers grow there!"

Thus she continued long, to my indescribable distress: gradually, however, she slept more quietly, until the morning about six o'clock, when she started violently with these words—"Air! I suffocate!" I threw open the door, and the fresh morning air streamed in. She inhaled it eagerly. Her strength seemed partly returned.

"Emma," said she, "I have prayed neither to-day nor yesterday. O God, forgive me that I have forgotten Thee! Emma, I sin so much. People should not on account of their own sorrows forget God. But I have been so sick—now my reason is clear again. Come, let us pray!"

I fell on my knees beside her bed. With deep solemnity and sincere earnestness she prayed for all who were suffering,

all who were sick, for her father, her sisters—finally, she prayed for Alarik with all the warm life of love. She prayed till wearied out she fell back on her bed. After this she slept quietly and well about an hour. She then awoke evidently stronger, and said, “I wish to see the sky, and breathe the fresh air,—it would do me good. Let us go out, I am strong again.”

I gave her a warm pelisse, and let her out of the hut; we seated ourselves on the threshold, and breathed the pure and uncommonly mild September air.

The cottage lay on a height at the skirts of the forest. A wild field bordered by fir-forest lay before us; roads crossed each other on several sides through fields and meadows. It had rained and blown the whole night; but the storm was now completely stilled, and each little pool on the paths lay turned into a mirror for the sky, in which the brightening blue and lingering clouds seemed to contemplate themselves. Little yellow flowers before us waved on their weak stalks in the morning air, saluted and embraced each other; and choruses of little insects arose from the pearly grass without any other design than to dance and to sing. The falcon hovered in wide circles over the plain, and struck the clouds with his bold wing, while the little birds in the yellow birches near us twittered in careless gaiety. The sun was not shining, but a mild light lay over the landscape, more agreeable than sunshine, and along the dark green edge of the forest arose from the white chimneys of the cottages small columns of bluish smoke, which spread themselves gently and disappeared in the quiet air. The voices of men and animals sounded gaily around.

“What life!” said Adelaide, and looked round her with a glance which again began to beam; “how beautiful is the earth! Ah! if one could be very good, very resigned, then even misfortune would not be felt so bitterly, would not hinder us from thankfully enjoying what God’s goodness gives us. Emma, why should my sorrow prevent me from being glad for all the beauty I now look upon? All these voices which are heard around us, they bear witness of gay and happy existences—why cannot I rejoice in their happiness? Do you see all these little pillars of smoke, which rise towards heaven?” and with her finger she pointed to the

different places whence they arose; "do they not speak of comfortable homes, of household cares,"—and an expression of anguish passed over her face—"of husbands, and wives, and children collecting to the common meal? Are they not like offerings of thanksgiving which are sent up by earth's children to a bounteous heaven? Why can I not raise my soul to thank God for others' happiness, though I myself suffer? How egotistical is man, Emma; or rather how egotistical am I? I refer everything so much to myself, feel so little for others. I could cry over myself."

She learned her head against my shoulder, and her tears flowed freely.

"Good, sweet, beloved Adelaide!" was all I could falter out.

"Ah, Emma!" she said seriously, "I have not been good; I have been proud, foolish, presumptuous—have I not been presumptuous?"

I did not answer, for I could not say no.

"Yes, I have certainly been presumptuous—and with so little cause! God forgive me that! Alarik could not love me—I am so full of faults, he so superior——"

"Not superior," said I, with the displeasure I felt towards him; "he has been unreasonable—nay, hard and cruel towards you!"

"Not a word against him!" entreated Adelaide solemnly; "I will, I must believe in him—he has judged me, I must have deserved it. I will believe on him and his perfection—if he have ceased to love me, it is certainly my fault alone. Ah! he cannot see to my heart—he would forgive me for my love's sake. God will forgive me, and to Him I will go!"

I was in the highest degree surprised at these expressions, but did not dare to ask any explanation, for fear it would be too much for her strength; I contented myself, in the strongest words I was capable of, with assuring her that Alarik loved her, and none else but her. I related to her the little scene on the staircase at his departure.

"Take care, take care!" said Adelaide with a wild look; "give me no hope—it is terrible to lose it again! Say nothing, Emma. Ah! I know all,—know too well—too well, how it is!"

I was prevented from answering by the arrival of the

doctor; he was accompanied by people who were bringing a commodious litter; on that Adelaide was laid, and carried with the greatest care and tenderness to her home. We went well, though slowly, on our little journey. Adelaide was pleased with the flowers which I picked for her by the road-side, and was quiet and friendly. When we had arrived, and I had seen her to her room and on her bed, I went to write a letter to the President, whom, by the doctor's advice, I informed of his daughter's illness. When I returned to Adelaide, I heard earnest conversation in her room. I stopped in the half-open door, and saw Adelaide half-raised in her bed, with clasped hands and entreating eyes, speaking to Countess Augusta, who sat beside her bed.

"Tell me, tell me," she prayed, "if all were true that you told me the night before last. In God's name, by all that is holy, I beseech you, Augusta, answer me, tell me the truth! O Augusta! I have not, perhaps, much longer to live—Alarik can be yours when I am no longer on earth,—but now for mercy tell me the truth! Did he say that he loved you, that he no longer loved me?"

No answer came from Countess Augusta's lips.

"Augusta, do not be cruel," continued the entreating Adelaide; "if you knew how easy it would be for me to leave the world, were I only certain that he did not despise me. Augusta, I will promise you not to take a step to reunite myself with him—I cannot do it either, since he has cast me off. But tell me that he loved me, although he found me weak. Give this heaven to my heart, Augusta, dear Augusta! yet upon earth."

The Countess was yet silent. She turned away, and the profile of her face now became visible to me. A violent conflict betrayed itself there.

"Do you think," recommenced Adelaide's weak, soft voice—"do you think that I would be angry with you because you had deceived me, or because you turned Alarik's heart from me? Ah! do not think so, Augusta. Do you not love him?—and that explains, excuses all. With all my heart, Augusta, I will excuse the suffering you have caused me. You are impatient—you want to go—Augusta, wait a moment! Do not believe that I make any reservation in my pardon, that I make any conditions with it; no, now, now, if

even you should not say a word to give me ease, yet will I give it you. Augusta, if ever you should have a bitter moment upon earth; if you should regret," she raised herself up, and stretched her arms towards her sister—"Augusta, come nearer—then remember that Adelaide has forgiven you!"

She wanted to clasp her arms round her sister's neck, but at the same time fell exhausted back on her bed.

Countess Augusta hastened from her; but in the ante-chamber I caught her arm, stopped her, and said:

"Countess! I have heard Adelaide's prayers, and now I understand all. In this moment I will write to Count Alarik, unless by a free confession before him and Adelaide you again repair the mischief you have done."

She stammered out some incomprehensible words, disengaged her arm, and hastened away. Half an hour afterwards her carriage rolled over the court. She was gone.

This conversation with her sister had so violently excited Adelaide, that a fresh hemorrhage was the consequence. It was so violent, lasted so long, and the patient's condition was so deplorable when it was past, that the doctor declared another attack would be inevitable death, and that even now he could not answer for the consequence.

This news spread the deepest sorrow throughout the house; and every word, every accent, showed how sincerely Adelaide was beloved by all.

When, after some hours' sleep, Adelaide had regained a little strength, she read sorrow and disquiet on every face which surrounded her. She beckoned to me, and begged me softly to tell her truly what the doctor said of her state. I repeated to her his words, and in so doing could not restrain my tears.

"I shall then die!" said she, with a countenance beaming with joy—"Ah, God be praised! Weep not, my Emma, I am happy!" and she wiped away my tears with her hand. "Now I can ask to see him! Now it can no longer wound proprieties if I should seek him. Is it not death—Emma, must not all give way to death? O now I may once more see him—tell him how infinitely I love him;—perhaps I may die on his heart!—Write to him, Emma, best Emma.—Ah, then it is death which shall reunite us!"

I wrote immediately, and directed my letter to his estate, where I presumed he had gone.

I told Adelaide my suspicions regarding Countess Augusta; I wanted to show her how this unlucky misunderstanding had probably arisen, but Adelaide interrupted me.

"Say nothing now," begged she. "My understanding is not clear—I cannot well conceive—I can scarcely remember how it happened. But what does all this signify now," added she with a bright glance, "shall I not die? Before I die I shall see him—he shall read in my heart. He shall see there so much love, that he will love me for the sake of my love. All will be clear, all well between us; I have not a doubt of it, I feel it. Ah, I am so glad, Emma! All is so easy, so beautiful; God has been merciful towards me!"

The doctor forbade Adelaide to speak so much. She asked to see her little sisters, and promised to be silent. The little ones came quite surprised, full of trouble and wondering. They crept on their sister's bed, and seated themselves one on each side of her. They had been desired not to speak; they did not understand their sister's danger; but when they saw her so pale, they began to cry. She caressed them tenderly, and played with their light curling hair. They kissed her white hands. It was a beautiful and touching picture.

The whole night and the following day Adelaide remained in the same quiet and happy state, but enjoyed no sleep. She seemed to wait some one, though without disquiet. All the images before her fancy were bright and peaceful. One could say that she reposed in her Heavenly Father's arms, and certain of His love she had peace, and gladly left her fate to Him; she desired only to bid farewell to one friend, and afterwards to fall quietly asleep.

During this time Adelaide even occupied herself with the arrangement of her small earthly affairs. No possessor of millions ever made his will with greater care. Here were the old and infirm, to whom Adelaide gave a certain sum a year for their maintenance and relief; there children whom she kept at school, and so on. She had hitherto provided for these with her pocket-money, and she desired that at her death her clothes and her trinkets might be sold, and the money proceeding from them might be employed for a con-

tinuation of these little pensions. On this occasion I was made to admire, as I have often done, how much beneficence may be effected by small means, when they are managed by sincere goodwill, and prudent care and activity.

Towards evening on the second day Adelaide became uneasy; she wept silently. After a moment she became calm again, and asked for her guitar. She raised herself up, struck some accords, and began to sing.

"She must not sing!" said the doctor, who now came in from the other room.

She looked at him with her grave, somewhat defying air, and said, "The doctor must not forbid me what pleases me. This does not do me harm!" and she continued her song. I begged her to stop.

"Do not deny me what I desire!" said Adelaide with some energy. "Might I not sing?" continued she with a dazzling tear in her eye—"does not the swan sing in his dying moments? Am not I the swan? I die—I can therefore sing!"

And she sang:

Now it is passed! my life's short day is done,
 And I will sing, for I would cease to be.
 Yes, it was fair that shore, sailed past and gone,
 But yet more fair, beyond death's quiet sea,
 The island of the blest which beckoneth me!
 I sing, for I must die—and I would pour
 Forth with my song my soul, from life and pain.
 Farewell! I hasten to that happy shore,
 Where with a clearer voice, more certain strain,
 My life, my love, I yet shall sing again!

We no longer thought of preventing her. The doctor had sate down, and wiped his eyes. Adelaide continued to sing. Her voice became more certain and melodious, her eye more beaming. I contemplated her with astonishment and admiration. The chiselled beauty of her features was more than ever remarkable in this moment, when her face was as white as marble, and a sort of mild light spread over it; and as she gave herself entirely up to the inspiration of her singing, her pious and steady eye seemed already to gaze into the home of the blessed. I almost expected that her spirit should be wafted away during this death-song, which gradually began to become more broken and weak. "O God!" I prayed silently, "let me soon follow her!"

Now there was a trampling in the court. With haste and a noise like thunder, a carriage drove up and stopped.

The guitar fell from Adelaide's hands. "It is he! It is he!" she exclaimed; a passing colour mounted in her cheeks, after which she sank back as pale as death. I left her to the doctor's care, and went out to ask after the new-comer. It was really Count Alarik. By the dumb despair painted in his countenance, I saw that he knew all.

"Has the Count met Countess Augusta?" I asked hurriedly.

He bowed his head affirmatively. "I know all," he said; he looked at me with a glance of inexpressible anguish, and his pale lips could but stammer out, "Adelaide?"

"She lives!" said I; but at the same time burst into tears.

He cast a glance of burning gratitude towards heaven, and seized my hand. "Conduct me to her feet!" he exclaimed.

I told him now of Adelaide's weak condition. I represented to him that he must be patient, circumspect; that we must avoid all which could over-excite her. I was interrupted by a message from her which called me in.

Adelaide sat up in bed with eyes full of tenderness and impatience. "Why does he not come?" she asked; "why does he delay? Will he not see his Adelaide? Does he know that she calls for him, that she will die on his heart?"

The doctor wished to prevent the meeting for the evening, saying that it would excite Adelaide too much for the night.

"Will you have me die now immediately through longing and impatience?"-asked Adelaide. "You must not be unreasonable, for then I shall become disobedient. Forgive me," she continued, bursting into tears; "I know that you mean well, but you do not know what is good for me. I promise you afterwards to be quiet; before that I cannot be so."

A new message came from the Count. He would absolutely come in to Adelaide. It signified nothing seeking to hinder these two loving beings from uniting. I conducted Count Alarik in; Adelaide raised herself up with a weak cry, and stretched her arms towards him; he darted forward, threw himself on his knees by her bed, and clasped her to his bosom.

CHAPTER XX.

GO NOT AWAY.

Go not away! I will not be alone!
 I will behold thee, keep thee to the end;
 List to thy voice, the pure, the blessed tone:
 Go not away! my treasure and my friend!

Look on me! In thine eyes, as pure as heaven,
 My soul has peace, my weary thoughts find rest;
 Light unto darkness from thy glance is given,
 And calm'd the anxious pulses of my breast.

Speak to me! Let me hear the blessed sound
 Which made a heaven of Eden's happy grove,
 When only holy love on earth was found,
 And man the image pure of God above.

O let me clasp thee nearer to my breast,
 Let me within thy faithful arms repose;
 Thus! thus! compared with this repayment blest,
 How light are all life's sufferings, all its woes!

Go not away, go not! Dark cloud would swallow
 Thee from mine eyes. Thou goest! give me thy hand.
 'Tis well! 'tis well! Thou goest—and I follow
 Into Death's unknown, night-o'ershadow'd land!

It is a blessed thing—and they who love sincerely know well how blessed—when, after a moment of misunderstanding, nay, perhaps even of mutual transgression, to repose heart against heart, and feel, sincerely feel, that one certainty is to be found on earth, one certainty which defies all the power of hell, one certainty which is heaven upon earth—that they love one another; that they belong to one another; that nothing, nothing in the world, shall divide those who have found each other in true, celestial love. O! this is a certainty, the most beautiful which is to be found upon earth—a certainty, the ground and guarantee of every other. He felt it well, that man, who, about to pass from the theatre of life, laid his hand upon his heart, and said, “I love, therefore I am immortal.”*

Immortal mortals! well for you, if you have here been permitted to experience this explanation of life—true love! Well for you, if God has permitted this golden thread to run through and brighten the dark web of your earthly life!

There are eternal harmonies, eternal sympathies; “there are people who are born for each other.” When they meet

* Fritz Stollberg.

in the world, then spring up these quickly-woven bonds of friendship—this irresistible power of attraction—those inward sympathies between two beings—which human reason cannot explain, which it has gone out of fashion to believe in, and which yet exist, and are so precious to the hearts in which they reveal themselves. They are sparks sprung from mysteries, which may well be called Elysian.

These lovers for eternity; these two who had found one another; who in spite of all, must belong to one another, must become one, I now saw in Adelaide and Alarik. Long reposed they heart to heart, and life seemed to have no enigma, no question for them.

But only for a moment can we on earth bear heaven within our breast. Time goes its slow course, and envelops in mist all the sunshine of life—and thence in this vile world arise difficulties, such as explications and justifications even between the tenderest friends.

“Adelaide, canst thou forgive me?” were the first words which could struggle forth from Count Alarik’s violently agitated breast.

“O say not so!” was all she had the power to answer.

“Adelaide, I am not worthy of thee—I have been hard and unjust towards thee——”

“No, say not so! I was so faulty, so childish, you must——”

“No explanations!” begged I, warning them, “not now at least. Remember that Adelaide’s life and your happiness depend on her being kept quiet and undisturbed to regain her strength. Look at each other, enjoy the certainty of loving each other, of being together—but let fine speeches alone, neither do they now seem to be requisite.”

“Only one question, one single question yet!” begged Adelaide. “Alarik!” and she clasped her hands and looked at him with a serious and piercing look; “Alarik, answer me, and tell me the truth, as you would say it before God—do you love me? And do you love me more than any one on earth?”

“Adelaide, you punish me severely!” said Count Alarik, and covered his eyes with his hand; large drops fell on Adelaide’s arm.

“No, take away your hand! No, look at me, Alarik! my

beloved Alarik, look at me. I have suffered so much—my understanding is weakened;—answer me so that I may fully understand it—do you love me?”

Alarik looked up at her with the fulness of love, and said with deep seriousness: “God is my witness, Adelaide, that I never loved any other than thou! Thou alone wert my heart’s wisdom and folly; my first, my last, my only love!”

With a cry of joy, gratefully outstretched hands, and an expression of happiness which spread a light over her face, Adelaide sunk back on her bed.

“And now peace with you!” said I, smiling, as I softly tried to separate the lovers. “Be tranquil now, if you wish to live for one another.”

They were tranquil; they looked at one another, her hand rested in his, words of love and joy glided over their lips.

I seated myself, a shadow in the shadow, not far from this bright image of love, and shed quiet tears over it.

When the night approached, I desired that they should separate, that each might enjoy some repose. But although I pronounced my admonitions in good Swedish, the lovers seemed to think that I spoke in the language of the Christian assemblies of the Apostles, which language it is now confessed, though occasionally spoken, is no longer understood upon earth.—I could really neither make myself heard nor understood, and, therefore, ceased to talk in this fashion; and Count Alarik remained the night in Adelaide’s room, watched over her, and gave her with his own hand the quieting medicines which the doctor had prescribed. A tenderness and mildness was in his care, an almost womanly instinct, which I had hardly thought belonged to that powerful man. But the most delicate growth can spring from the hardest soil, when it is warmly breathed on by love.

Adelaide fell quietly asleep in the night. She was indescribably beautiful where she lay—an image of innocence, goodness, and peace.

By Count Alarik’s words I perceived that he took it for certain that she should live, and would not prepare himself for anything else.

“But if——” said I sorrowfully.

“She shall not die!” said he with a certainty as if he were God himself. O poor mortals!

Shortly afterwards Adelaide awoke. "I feel myself very weak," said she in a faint voice. "Alarik, I must speak with you ere it is too late."

"You shall not die!" he cried with wild alarm, and clasped her in his arms. "Heaven's angels shall not snatch you from me!"

"But God, Alarik, but God! We cannot set ourselves against God's will. That would be madness. God's will be done! What He does is good."

"God cannot, God will not take you from me!" was his wild and despairing outcry.

"O speak not so, Alarik!" implored Adelaide with affecting tenderness and humility. "Let us not repine, let us be resigned. How can you think that what God does can be other than good? Neither shall I leave thee, though I die. I shall be with thee as an angel. I shall surround thee with my wings when thou sleepest and when thou wakest; I shall waft peace to thy heart; every prayer that thou prayest I shall carry up to God, and return with its answer to thee; I shall await thee, my Alarik, in that bright land where there is no more sorrow nor parting; and in thy last struggle I will appear to thee, I shall weep a tear, and take thy spirit with a kiss. Ah! dost thou know it is beautiful there above the clouds in God's clear heaven? I know it; I have felt it within these few days——"

"And thou wilt leave me, Adelaide, for that heaven?"

"If God so wills. Willingly would I live for thee on earth, O how willingly! But God's will be done. We shall soon be reunited."

My pen is impotent to depict the scenes which followed. Who has really the power on one side to represent this despairing combat of love against invisible powers to retain what it loves; and on the other, that angelic peace, that resignation, that pure consolation and higher love, which does not view life in separate moments—which, feeling God's life in its own bosom, sees in death but a passage, a quiet sleep, followed by a new morning, with clearer sun, and more powerful love.

Adelaide exacted from Alarik pardon for Augusta. He could not, he said, forgive her.

“You cannot?” said Adelaide sorrowfully. “O Alarik! how can we then pray, ‘*and forgive us our sins?*’——”

“Do not speak of her now,” interrupted Count Alarik violently; “now I could curse——”

Adelaide laid her hand on his mouth, and began to weep. He kissed away her tears, became calmer, and promised to forgive her for the sake of her prayer.

I saw them so moved, that I was afraid it might be injurious to her. I prayed them to be calm, and proposed to read something to them. They willingly agreed; and that I might at the same time fix their attention and calm their feelings, as well as with the secret desire of giving a lesson, with regard to Adelaide, to the philosopher Alarik, I read Paul’s beautiful chapter on love:

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

I laid particular emphasis on these words:

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

* * * * *

“And now abideth faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE GOOD SLEEP.

O! who above the clouds like me shall love thee?
 A glorious seraph in his happy lot?
 Wings has he, he has beauty there above me,—
 The gift to love like me, that has he not.
 Unto his holy breast earth's love is vain,
 The bliss of his high heaven is of his choice;
 While I am bound to thee in joy or pain,
 'Tis I alone can answer to thy voice.

If thou love—if thou sincerely love—if, in thy friend's heart, in her eye, thou have found the sabbath of thy soul—if in love and its perfection thou have conceived the goodness of God, and the bliss of heaven, and thou be forced to fear that the beating of that heart will cease beneath thy hand, that that love will go out in that beloved eye——

And if then remorse rise accusingly up against thee by the death-bed of thy beloved, and say—"Thou hast not loved well; thy love was soiled by unworthy doubts; for thy sake, thy treasure lies here ready to sink into the dark grave; thou hast plunged her there; woe, woe to him who cannot love rightly!——"

And if friends will console thee; if thy beloved herself will raise her gentle voice, and whisper,

O murmur not! it is so good to die,
 To die while young—from this vain world away;
 To turn aside, and calmly close the eye,
 Then open it upon a brighter day.

And if then, with the sentiment of the infinite love in thy breast, thou art ready to defy heaven itself to give a higher happiness than thy love would have given——

If thou have experienced these sentiments of tremulous love, of remorse, of strife with heaven itself, then thou canst understand Count Alarik's state of mind during several days which he passed watching by Adelaide's bed. She lay in the greatest danger. Count Alarik did not turn his eye from her; he spoke not; but by the expression of his face, one would have said that he struggled with the angel of death who had been sent for his beloved. He *would not* that she should die.

When Adelaide spoke with her betrothed during the course

of these days, she tried to prepare him for her departure—she spoke of the happiness reserved for her in heaven.

Alarik answered—“None will love you as I do, Adelaide. Can happiness be increased when the bands of love are sundered? Can any one understand you as I do? could angels give you more bliss than I? O Adelaide! have you learned to mistrust the strength of my affection?”

She denied it. She smiled on him through her tears. She told him that he alone could make her happy; but that they should not be long divided. All that she said was gentle, was tender, was good, was a soothing balsam to his soul.

On the seventh day, Adelaide fell into a deep sleep. When she awoke after several hours' rest, the doctor pronounced her better.

“Better!” repeated Count Alarik. He went out; and, for the first time since the evening of his arrival, his tears flowed. He bowed his knees, and thanked God.

When he returned to Adelaide, she stretched her arms towards him. “I shall live for thee!” she said.

They wept like children; but oh, how happy they were!

In the evening of that day, the lovers fell upon the desperate thought of explaining the causes of the unfortunate misunderstanding which had arisen between them. This conversation satisfied and yet excited them. Countess Augusta, under pretence of correcting a fault in the drawing, had got the portrait in her hands which was destined for Adelaide; this the latter had during the last few days already suspected. All gradually became clear to their eyes; they wept over their own faults, and shuddered at each other's suffering. The errors of the past shed a light on the future.

“I shall never doubt thee more, my Adelaide,” said Count Alarik, as he pressed her tenderly to his heart. “Never more will I disturb thy innocent gaiety with a dark suspicion. O may it never cease as long as I live, my blessed Adelaide! my life's flower! my joy!”

“And if I should live to belong to thee on earth,” said Adelaide, “I shall not be childish and thoughtless as before. Ah! this short time of suffering has done me much good! I have, during these few days, thought more and more seriously of life than during my whole lifetime before. I will be thy joy, Alarik; but not only as I have hitherto

been: I have caught glimpses of life's higher dignity and beauty; thou wilt teach me to feel it fully. Lead me, my Alarik; I will be thy willing disciple—I will gladly follow where thou leadest—I will——”

“Shall there be pancakes or pastry to supper?” called I suddenly at the door, to make a diversion in this more feeling than healthy conversation.

The little children were with me. They carried a plate each, I myself carried a basket loaded with cherries.

Adelaide called in the little ones. Count Alarik freed them from the plates, and lifted the children upon their sister's bed. They kissed and embraced each other.

But now Adelaide wished also to eat. The children must decamp from the bed.

“May I hold your plate, Adelaide?” said Alarik.

“Yes, if you fall on your knees!” answered she, with all her former joking arrogance.

“You are getting well!” he cried, enchanted, knelt down, and offered her the plate, full of beautiful crimson cherries.

She fed him and herself alternately—they joked, they murmured, they laughed, they took the cherries from each other's lips; they seemed unable sufficiently to make themselves one.

O love! blessed, wise madness!

CHAPTER XXII.

A SHORT CHAPTER.

Which really were too short, were there not others which are too long.

EHRENSVÄRD.

LOVE and prayer kept watch for Adelaide; death went past. The President returned with Edla, both happy in having learned to know each other. Countess Augusta's wickedness was concealed; she travelled abroad. Adelaide became well, and rosy, and gay. The banns were published in church, but the marriage was performed at home. Adelaide wept and smiled. The children wondered. The priest and President gave their benediction. Certainly amen was said in heaven. The President and Mamselle Rönquist danced the *Anglaise*. Somebody wept silent tears over the loss of her delight; Count Alarik travelled away with it some days after the marriage.

CHAPTER XXIII.

APART, BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND ME.

PRES.—She is a genius, and you are——
MAMSELLE R.—*Plait-il.*

THE PRES.—“ Depend upon it, *bonne amie!* Edla is a real genius. She will be a light for her native country. She wants to know everything; she asks about everything; she understands everything; she has asked questions of me, of a depth—it is a pleasure to me to instruct her. She is astonishing! Professor A. could not sufficiently express his admiration of her clear head. Professor A., Mamselle Rönquist! That is not a trifle, that—I could only wish that Edla were not so distrustful of herself, so shy!——”

I.—“ Edla is really according to my conviction little inclined to appear before the public with what she knows. She is more inclined to live retired with what she can acquire of intellectual riches, to make herself and her nearest connexions happy with them. She has no ambition.”

THE PRES.—“ That is a pity, Mamselle Rönquist, a great pity. One should not put one’s candle under a bushel, but let its light shine for the world. Well, Edla is very young yet, and can have time to prepare herself for her important calling. I will only desire that no lover meanwhile—that devil of a Professor looked to me quite meditative!——”

I.—“ Edla will never leave her father. I know her determined will in that respect. She will employ her life in procuring comfort and enjoyment for him.”

THE PRES.—“ God bless her for that. I confess that it would now be very difficult for me to get on without her. Meantime her happiness must be the first object. And when I besides am so happy as to possess in my house a friend, such as Mamselle Rönquist—in truth—I hope—hem—you are——”

I.—“ *Plait-il.*”

THE PRES.—“ My best Mamselle Rönquist, my best friend—I hope——”

My reader! I hope that you will not think ill, if I skip over the President’s and my hopes, the sooner to conduct you to the “ Home of Happiness.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE HOME OF HAPPINESS.

O how beautiful to see, is the smoke of one's own home.—FRANZEN.

The bay of a lake, some wooded heights, between them fields and meadows, and on an elevation from which one has a view of the whole, even of a town itself; such is the general appearance of Sweden.—FORSELL (Statistics of Sweden.)

Love strikes root in the finite, but strives towards heaven, and breathes in the light for every wanderer—it stands in the dawn of a higher world.—B—N.

Is there to be found a gift of heaven more precious, more worthy our most ardent gratitude, than that of possessing a family, a home, where virtues, kindnesses, and enjoyments, are every-day guests, where the heart and the eye sun themselves in a world of love, where the thoughts are lively and enlightened, where friends not only by word but by action say to each other—"Thy joy, thy sorrow, thy hope, thy prayer, are mine!"

See how within such a noble and happy family every different gift unites itself to form an agreeable element of goodness and beauty, in which every member of the family finds his life; where each capability receives its development, each feeling its counterpart and its answer; each pure desire its flower! See, how tears are like a heavenly dew, smiles like the sunlight which entices out the flowers, and love, love is the blessed, the fruitful earth from which the seeds of all that is good and to be enjoyed spring graciously up! See, how the body (for it is to be included) enjoys itself and thrives in the harmonious regulations of home, and with fruits which are not, like those of the first Paradise—*forbidden!*

Life within a happy family is a continual development—a continual spring.

O my mother! O my sweet sisters! Ye who taught me to bless home—it is to you are dedicated these lines, these grateful tears which moisten my eyes!

I will speak of family and home, I will speak of them for Sweden's daughters, not to teach them anything, but to give back to them in a faithful mirror the pictures which the noble amongst them have let me view, for it is pleasant to be a mirror to the good—may it be my happy lot in life!

I have seen home in the cot on the sandy heath; I have seen it in the princely castle, adorned by the arts; I have

seen it in the burgher's simple and convenient dwelling ; and in each, where virtue and love united the bonds of family intercourse, there its genius, good and guardian woman, stood watchful and active ; I saw everywhere the same kindly sights, heard everywhere the same soft harmonies. Riches and poverty made no difference.

Goodness and order, these, heaven's serving-spirits upon earth, call forth everywhere the same peace and the same comfort. No bitter root has leave to grow there. Where it would grow comes either a smile or a tear, and with these a kind word to stifle it. Love watches over the cradle of infancy, over the rest of old age, over the well-being and comfort of each individual. In order to be happy, man turns from the life of the world—home.

The sorrowful heart finds comfort in home ; the disquieted, peace ; the gay has there his life's true element. Where do you hear the agreeable joke, which only excites to satisfy ; where those glad words full of tenderness and praise ; where that hearty laughter, those cries of sincere enjoyment to which innocence and goodness every day respond, and which form every-day-life's light, living fireworks ; where do you perceive them all, these innumerable little pleasantnesses, which give the objects of life a heightened beauty—if not within the virtuous and happy family ? Mind where, as there, do you find these self-denying lives, these pure unsung sacrifices for each other's well-being ; that faithful and hallowed love, which unites itself in this life and lifts the soul to heaven—where, if not there, do you find that pure bliss, which makes us sometimes dream that heaven has nothing more beautiful to offer than earth ?

Pious spirits, when they speak of dying, speak of going "*home.*" Their longing for heaven is for them the same as their longing for home. Jesus even shows us the dwelling of eternal bliss under the image of a home—of "His Father's house."

Does not this tell us that our earthly home is intended to be an image of our heavenly home—a pathway, a fore-court to that higher home ?

The North is cold and serious. The arts do not there possess their dwelling-place ; the time of flowers is short. Will you see their native earth, see Italy, see France ; will

you see the consecrated earth of home, of families, see Sweden! See everywhere amongst the rocks and the forests those quiet dwellings, where man enjoys an ennobled natural life; where, in the bosom of holy and precious relationship, are developed piety and bravery, the national virtues of Sweden.

And now, while we are on such a good path, let us turn into Adelaide's home. I have called it "the Home of Happiness," and sincerely desire that my readers may do the same. Let me see if I, with the help of my cousin Beata Everyday's pen (which that late personage bequeathed to me), shall not be able to obtain the testimony also of your tongue, my reader.

A clear November morning dawned over M. on the morrow of that day on which Count Alarik had introduced his lovely bride into the hall of his fathers. While we are in the way of intruding into houses, and committing indiscretions, let us take a look at the young Countess's sitting-room. No dust on the green carpet; on the windows and mirror no spot. The air is embalmed with mignonette. The breakfast-table, with a dazzling white tablecloth and smoking coffee is standing by the sofa. Some beautiful pictures, by Sweden's best artists, decorate the walls. Where are the young couple themselves? Yes! Alarik and Adelaide are standing by the window; he with his arm round her waist, she with her lovely head leaning on his shoulder.

The first snow had fallen in the night, and like a large white sheet lay the lake before the stately old castle. The tall fir forest stretched its snowy crowns wide around towards the skies, and on the other side of the lake lay a ridge of rocks of extraordinary form. From afar in the forest was heard the cheerful and vigorous strokes of the axe. Now and then a large snowflake fell through the quiet air, the sky became clearer and clearer, and the clouds became more deeply died in purple and gold, till they were suddenly forced to pale before the beaming glance of the king of day, as he arose clear and glorious from his white bed on the horizon. The fields and the trees were soon clothed in a diamond mantle; they glittered with a thousand stars; but it was not in rivalry, but as homage and thanks.

And this noble scene was contemplated by two happy

beings. Count Alarik's eagle-eye reposed on the sun, and bore unaverted his dazzling beams. Adelaide gaily and piously bent her head as if to hail the spreader of joy, and sang Tegnér's "Song to the Sun,"

Dig jag sjunger en sång, etc.

To thee I raise my song, high glorious sun!

then suddenly interrupting herself, and clasping her hands in delight, she exclaimed:

"Ah, in spring! then here it must be beautiful! when the lake is open, and the sun entices out flower after flower—and all this I may see, may enjoy with thee! O Alarik! how beautiful is life! How pleasant to live!"

"To live!" repeated Count Alarik thoughtfully, "and what is it to live?" asked he smiling as he contemplated Adelaide.

"To love!" replied Adelaide with warmth, "and to adore Him who gave us love. O how much less we should enjoy of the good things of life, had we not an all-good Giver to thank! I love thee, Alarik, I thank God, and this is the same thing to me, and this is my happiness."

"And I will thank Him for the gift of thee, my Adelaide, as for life's best treasure," said Count Alarik as he pressed her warmly to his heart, and looked thankfully up to heaven. "But sentiments alone are not enough for life, we must——"

"I know, I know," interrupted Adelaide with a kiss, and a playful smile, "we must think, study, make ourselves useful in our generation, read history, and all that—no! do not become grave! Look, all wisdom is born merely of the heart's warmth. When the sun shines on the earth, it bears forth fruit. I love thee—what is the interest of thy life, will become that of mine also. 'Thy land shall be my land, and thy friends, my friends.' "——This last she added with deep-felt seriousness.

"But tell me," continued she, "are people in our days with all their learning really happier than, for instance, the Patriarchs were in their time? Are the Swedes now better and happier than their ignorant forefathers several hundred years back?"

"The greater mass of people are better and happier," answered Count Alarik. "Science and art have by their ad-

vance given to humanity organs for their different powers ; rich means for enjoyment, and defence against suffering. But the right scale by which to estimate the advance of the human race would be better ascertained by our looking into the family life of former days, and comparing it with that of ours. Through acquaintance with family life—this root of the life of society—we should first learn to perceive in what degree human life has gained in happiness and elevation. I think, my Adelaide, that you, by a nearer contemplation, would not wish to change our times for former times, nor your home for a hut in the groves of Mamre, though it might be shaded by palm-trees ; neither for a knightly castle, though you would there have to work the banner for your armed and plundering Viking ; and although in the Patriarchal as in the Chivalric ages, there would be no need for you to learn, and you might call your husband, ' lord ! ' ”

“ My lord and husband ! ” said Adelaide as she bowed to Alarik with a humility full of fascination—“ then as now it had always been a happiness and an honour. But tell me, best Alarik, how does it then happen that these our days are not in general happier ? Are there not even now many unhappy and divided families ? ”

“ There are, ” answered Count Alarik ; “ but it is their own fault ; all the elements for happiness and improvement are found in life ; we require but to stretch out our hands to reach them. Much evil and much misery, it is true, cleave to our times : but it is a time of struggle and development ; a remarkable moment of passage, and the cry of victory already sounds over the cry of distress. We shall during the winter evenings read history together, and you will there see a noble sight—God's development in humanity. You will see how He gives himself to our race in clearer beams, in a growing intimacy, more and more according as it has power to receive Him. You shall see how humanity, nourished by the life of the Eternal One, develops ever more fully and harmoniously its members—glances more clearly to heaven—how its spiritual, its celestial form gradually brightens in the contemplation of the Almighty—you shall see this, and you shall rejoice ; feel yourself happy, that even you are called, in your degree, to spread God's kingdom upon earth.

And you shall find, my Adelaide, that the enjoyment of life can stand side by side with its seriousness—nay! that they could not be without one another.”

Adelaide looked brightly and full of glad presentiments up to her husband. “I think I understand you,” said she; “and when all new-married couples keep what they have promised before God, as we shall do, when finally the whole human race makes but one single holy family, then the moment of union shall have arrived between God and his earth, and then shall the happy bride say like me, ‘O how good is God! God be praised!’”

“O how good is God! God be praised!” joined Count Alarik with warmth, and clasped his wife to his breast.

So stood they both—pious, good and happy, united in an earthly and in a heavenly love—man and woman.

And if any of my readers should fear that a love, which lived so entirely in life’s higher regions, should leave temporal concerns in neglect—if some careful and lovely reader should exclaim, “While they are standing here, and speaking, ‘*pour se former le cœur et l’esprit,*’ the coffee is growing cold!” I shall take upon myself to inform her respectfully, that in spite of the conversation in the window they were in time to enjoy it quite warm, together with fresh-baked rûks; and I would willingly here make a picture of the *lady of the house*, and the *mistress of the house*, such as I saw them in Adelaide, the careful and watchful, who had her eye everywhere, and yet left every one in peace and freedom to attend to his own duties; the attentive, who adorned her simple table as tastefully as she arranged her cupboard orderly—who was careful of her noble husband’s comfort in the very least thing, and kept the servants in order and in brilliant humour, and entered into the smallest details of every-day life with a spirit and taste which imparted to them a poetry and charm.

“Poetry and charms in every-day life’s occupations!” cried distrustfully Mrs. Shopkeeper Tungmin, to whom I read this passage, and she began to sigh over to me *pro memoria*, of baking, brewing, washing, etc., etc.

Nevertheless it was as I have said; for order, goodness, and gaiety, were little household divinities in Adelaide’s home, and kept watch, and beat time everywhere.

“And whence had she the power to charm forth these?”

Yes; by this, that she was happy and deserving of her happiness; that she could love him whom she esteemed, with whom she had united her life; and love—love, that celestial guest, has the power to raise this life's heaviest dough.*

And now, beloved reader—if I could offer you a more pleasing picture than that of a loving and happy pair; of a home, a fore-court of heaven—I would try to produce it to do you a pleasure; but as I do not conceive myself to have that power, so——away with my pen!

* Most honoured housekeepers! do the Authoress the justice to believe, that she well knows that a proper dough rises of itself, and graciously take this comparison less to the letter.

THE
PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTERS.

PART THE SECOND.

N I N A.

Formerly misfortune was ruder—now it is of a sentimental kind.

Life is the development of a splendid drama.—B.

EHRENSVÄRD.

P R E F A C E.

As the blessed Mamselle Rönquist lay on her death-bed from the unblest cholera, I received from her a packet with the following words :

“As thou art the best friend that I possess in this world, I therefore send thee herewith some notices of a family with whom I lived the greatest part of my days, and which appeared to me worthy of being penned down. With a somewhat nicer elaboration they might probably form a continuation of my story of ‘THE PRESIDENT’S DAUGHTERS.’ If thou findest in these papers matters to afford interest to the reader, I am persuaded that thou wilt set thyself to work them out, and to weave them into a whole. With the age of the actors in the narrative, with the time in which the events occur, as well as with the local circumstances, thou canst deal and order as thou wilt, and allow thyself therein the same freedom which I have allowed myself. All this is of minor importance in a little volume which concerns itself only with the history of the heart. Gladly do I bequeath to thee the finishing of my feeble sketches. Thou wilt certainly perform it better than myself, since thou art older; and life is a teaching, a going to school, in which every new year should advance us into a higher class. I too am now about to ascend higher; I go to learn more,—but probably not to write more. Farewell, till the brighter morning!

“Thine,

“EMMA.”

I have done what Emma Rönquist desired; how?—thou, friendly reader, mayst decide. Behold!

But who then is “I?” thou wilt ask. Dear reader, I am,—if thou art good,—but especially if thou art unfortunate—with my whole heart,

THY HUMBLE SERVANT.

THE
PRESIDENT'S DAUGHTERS.

PART II.

N I N A.

CHAPTER I.

OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

Well, are you all now assembled here?—BELLMAN.

WE enter an apartment in which the beautiful carpets, the soft sofas, the brilliant mirrors, the richly curtained windows, and the like, present that pleasant picture of comforts which luxury, the busy artist of modern times, is continually labouring to perfect. With his gaze fixed on the chess-board, sits on a sofa the well-preserved President, or more properly, his Excellency von H. Before him we see his daughter Edla, as she is in the very act of quietly allowing herself to be checkmated by her father; and this, partly because she has already won one game from him, partly because his Excellency did not take it in the best humour. Now, however, suddenly the play, and with it the humour of the President, take a favourable turn.

“The queen, dear Edla,” observed he, “is a costly figure; without her there is no life in the play. You must not be angry if I deprive you of yours, and say *check*, and—*mate!*!”

“Mate! Yes; actually without salvation,” cried Edla. “That was a splendid manœuvre. How closely hemmed in my knights now stand.”

His Excellency rubbed his nose, blew it, and could not, with the very best will, prevent himself laughing heartily at his fast-imprisoned daughter; upon which he said with great friendliness—“If you be not altogether too completely checkmated, my good child, give me a cup of tea.”

“Directly,” replied Edla with alacrity.

The President leaned himself back comfortably on the sofa.

At some distance from these, we see at a window another

group. A young lady of extraordinary beauty is busy arranging fresh flowers in a vase which stands before her. Another lady, not young, and still less handsome, but in the most exact and finished toilette, sits opposite to her, and works a shepherdess in an embroidery frame. Before her stands a handsome, high-bred looking young man, whose large, proud, and penetrating eyes are incessantly fixed on the Madonna countenance of the younger lady.

The President—I cannot yet break myself of the habit of calling him by his old title—had, after chess and tea, brightened into a more cheerful mood; he glanced with a degree of emotion at the group at the window, and said to Edla—“It is really not to be denied that there is scarcely to be found a handsomer couple than Nina and Count Ludwig. It does one’s soul absolutely good to look at them both. But when I think that Nina will certainly soon leave us, and that you also, my best Edla, will then probably soon make happy a husband, I feel——”

“As far as I am concerned, my good father, nothing of the sort can be said. I desire nothing less than to give up my present pleasant condition. I feel myself happy, and will never leave my dear father.”

“But that I cannot agree to,” replied the President. “I cannot desire that you should wholly sacrifice yourself for me. No, my child; happy as your tender care makes me, happy as I should continually feel through it, regard for me must not be allowed to place itself as an impediment in the way of your natural vocation. And I—I—I shall also——”

“My kind, best father,” interrupted Edla with tender emotion, “speak not of it. I declare, with the fullest truth, that I only follow the call of my heart, when I desire to change nothing in my present happy existence. I can nowhere find a more agreeable lot than in the house of my kind father, where I can follow all my inclinations.”

“You are the best of daughters; but in your father’s house also a change may take place—hem! hem! Nina will certainly soon marry, and I—I—yes, my good child, such a match as that with the Professor A., so rich, so learned, and agreeable a man does not offer itself every day. In fact, I should think it very wrong if you rejected his hand.”

"I honour A. with my whole heart," replied Edla; "he is my friend, my very best friend; but a nearer connexion with him would not make me happy. A. often deeply grieves me. His sceptical infirmity—for so one may style his freethinking want of faith in the highest and most important interests of humanity—is especially painful. I have to thank him for much enlightenment, much useful and valuable teaching; but at the same time he has called forth in my soul many a disquiet and many a pang. His burrowing, unresting, contradictory spirit banishes the quiet of my heart; I have often not been able for days to surmount the impression which a conversation with him has made on my mind."

"But, dear child, that will remedy itself when you see and speak with him every day and every hour. With your knowledge and your firm conviction, you will easily bring him back from his errors. You will wholly change his views; you will make a proselyte of him."

"Ah, my father!" answered Edla, sighing and smiling, "that is a work which far transcends my strength. I question extremely whether a doubter in God and in immortality will suffer himself to be led by argument to embrace the true faith. A. needs a wife, who, through her beautiful soul, her love, her piety and gentleness, will infuse into him the living feeling of that great truth against which his sifting and proving reason struggles. She must not dispute with him, she must vanquish him by her own inward faith, infect him as it were. I know that I by no means own nor possess what A. has need of for his salvation and for his happiness. I certainly could not make him happy."

"Well then, if it is not to be A., there is yet left us the State Counsellor P., who will assuredly declare himself next. He has already spoken to me of you, and truly in the highest terms of praise. He has just lately bought a large house in Queen-street, and really esteems you uncommonly."

"I am sincerely obliged to him for his good opinion, but I doubt whether he thinks of marrying me; and did he, I should also be compelled to refuse him equally with Professor A."

"Hear, my good Edla, my best child, I see how it stands. You reject all, because you think only of me. But I assure you that I have strength to bear it, that I have already thought upon it,—yes, dear daughter, for your sake, in order to afford

you perfect freedom, I have myself—I am truly no longer young, and the grave——”

“O my dear father, my kind, best father, speak no more of it!” implored Edla with warmth, while she laid her hand tenderly within his; “my father is still in his best years, and will yet live long for the happiness of his children. As to what concerns me, I can only repeat, that I feel myself thoroughly happy in my present circumstances, and would exchange them for none other in the world. At my age one does not so readily give up old and dear habits. You, dear father, and the quiet, pleasant occupations which I can follow undisturbed, fill the whole measure of my soul’s desires. Let me hope, best father,—tell me that it is no displeasure, no dissatisfaction with me which occasions you to-day continually to speak of my marriage?”

“No! good heavens! no, certainly not! How you talk! How can you only think, Edla, that I could possibly be dissatisfied with you? Now——” he continued with an expression in which a certain self-contentment mingled itself with a degree of ill-humour, “be it then as you will; I think only that it is a pity for the worthy men and for yourself; for people may say what they like—man is born for wedlock. Besides, I fear still, that hereafter, when Nina is married, you will find your solitude irksome. I have often pondered how, by some means or other, I might choose you an agreeable female companion, and only on your account——would I myself even——”

The President paused. Edla glanced attentively across at him, but all further communication was interrupted by the announcement of the State Counsellor P., to whom the President advanced with great cordiality, and welcomed him in the friendliest manner. The State Counsellor was a lively, talkative man. He conversed much with the President, but spoke properly only for Edla, whose countenance and looks he continually studied! and the whole of his demeanour betrayed that he indubitably had it in his mind to make her an offer of his hand and heart.

We will now make another visit to the window, and observe what is passing there.

The Baroness Alexandrina, somewhat small in mind, somewhat self-complacent, and somewhat untransparent, in a word,

somewhat mediocre, made commonplace observations on the signs of the times, and on the lamentable tendency to disturb everything, and to leave nothing untouched.

Her cousin, Count Ludwig, who generally behaved towards her with haughtiness and severity, either took no notice of her remarks, or turned them off with a dry stateliness.

"The gentlemen," said Alexandrina with flute-like voice, "will rule everywhere, and would have the greatest delight in turning the world topsyturvy. They kindle bloody wars only to indulge their thirst of fame; and neither reflect on the misery they occasion, nor on us poor women, who are obliged to sit as silent spectators."

"When a mighty spirit shapes its own path," answered Count Ludwig, "all lesser considerations must give way, and the hero who does battle for the good and the advancement of millions, cannot pause to inquire whether a cat mews or a woman moans over it."

"Gracious heavens! Cousin Ludwig, how you always speak. Nina, what do you say to it?"

"I think he is right," answered Nina, with a shy and melodious voice; "but——"

"Well, but?"

"But—it might have been otherwise expressed," continued she, deeply blushing.

A slight tinge of red was diffused over the stern features of Count Ludwig also as he said, "Miss Nina does not belong to the women to whom my remark referred. You certainly know how, with calmness and penetration, to yield yourself to necessity."

"That do I understand by no means; on the contrary, I fear that I should prove as weak as any woman whatever. The necessity of war, particularly, is not clear to me. Wherefore must there be oppressor and oppressed?"

"Since such is the course of the world," answered Count Ludwig coldly, "and we cannot alter it."

"If people then, at least, would only carry on war against the Turks," said Alexandrina. "That is an abominable nation, that one should drive out of Europe. Their horrible religion allows them even to drown women who have made a false step. Hu! Nina, have you lately seen the anecdote in

the Journal of Fashion? I could not sleep the whole night after it."

"The humanity and freedom of manners in most Christian France, under the rule of Orleans and Louis XV., appear to you probably more agreeable?" asked Count Ludwig, with a bitter ironical smile. "I confess that in these respects I hold similar opinions to the Turks."

Alexandrina called again on Nina for her opinion, but she kept silence. She asked only in her own heart whether no middle course was to be found between laxity and cruelty, and Count Ludwig's words occasioned her, as already so frequently, a peculiar feeling of embarrassment.

Fresh visitors arrived. Nina was asked to sing. She immediately complied, and her voice, which was not strong, but indescribably sweet, awoke in her hearers such an involuntary emotion, that one of them said, "Miss Nina has a tear in her voice."

And really this expression might have been extended to her whole appearance, which was exceedingly lovely, but so enveloped in a breath of sorrow, that the beholder was reminded of a supernatural being exiled from its celestial native land. This was the impression she made, at least on those who were inspired with a breath of poetry, though we must confess that one gentleman of the company, who was blest with a most excellent corpulence, thought her only weak or delicate, and with the best intention in the world made known his opinion of her health. Yet, when she soon afterwards conversed with him, he could not avoid looking wholly enraptured. For the rest, Nina appeared to send herself forth into the surrounding world, and only to live for the wishes of others. One might have been tempted to ask whether she really had a will of her own, and whether she lived on her own account.

As the impression of the song died away, the company returned to its ordinary tone, which announced itself by a brisk discourse on the state and the world. Edla was accustomed to keep silence during these conversations; but while she listened with interest to the debaters, her eye followed with motherly concern her sister Nina. When the buzz of voices became loud in the room, she observed her grow suddenly

pale, and lean her head against the wall. Edla stood immediately at her side, and whispered in her ear, "Are you unwell?"

"Yes," was Nina's faint reply. In silence Edla took her arm and conducted her into her bedchamber, and then returned to the company, though her thoughts remained with her sister.

Count Ludwig approached her and inquired, with a dissatisfied air, "What is this then again?"

"A little faintness. She is not accustomed to be amongst so many people, and cannot bear the noise of many voices."

"But do not you think that these nervous attacks proceed principally from imagination; that a degree of compulsion, a serious exhortation to conquer herself, would be salutary for her?"

"No—Nina must not constrain herself, she is too truthful, too simple-minded, to affect sensibilities; she is much too good not to conquer herself, if she could, because she knows that she would thereby give others pleasure. Time, patience, and a prudent mild treatment will most certainly, though probably only slowly, operate."

"You certainly know best," said Count Ludwig, "but I fear——"

"What—what do you fear?"

"That you, by too much indulgence, allow Nina to dream away her life. Without exertion, no one ever learns to conquer himself. I fear that you rather effeminate your sister."

The words of the Count went to Edla's heart; no reproof could be more painful to her, and its impression was strong enough to communicate to her manner a degree of sternness, when after the departure of the company she again sought Nina.

Nina had unbound her beautiful bright hair, to arrange it for the night, but appeared as if she had quite forgotten this task, for she sate by the table on which she had laid both arms, with her face buried in her hands. Her hair flowed in rich waves round her finely-formed snow-white arms. So sate she long, dreaming rather than thinking, and half-suppressed sighs heaved her bosom. Her appearance touched Edla; the stern feeling melted in her heart. Nina had not perceived the light entrance of her sister, but a hand which

passed softly and caressingly over her hair, made her suddenly look up, and she met the friendly inquiring gaze of Edla. There was in this gaze something unusually tender, and there was a chord in Nina's bosom which in fullest harmony to a friendly touch responded. She let her head rest on the arm of Edla, and looked affectionately up to her with the angelic but pale countenance in which trust and melancholy were mingled.

"So thoughtful? And why?" asked Edla with a quiet tone, and her clear and steady manner formed a strong contrast to the disposition of Nina, which swam in affection, in melancholy and indecision.

"I do not myself know——" answered Nina; "I would that you could unriddle it for me. Clouds gather over my soul, and disquiet me."

"And these clouds?—have they no determined shape, no signification?"

"No!—nothing clear; but they come frequently. I wish that I could penetrate them with my glance; they veil from me a clearness which I yearn after. Ah! Edla, tell me, what is life? what it means—to live?"

Edla drew her arm softly from beneath Nina's lovely head, and seated herself quietly beside her.

"Life, my dear child, is a warfare. To live, means to develop our strength, our indwelling goodness."

"But happiness, Eda, what is happiness?"

"To know oneself—that gives peace and freedom."

"But Edla, what is enjoyment, what is joy? How do we recognise that? Whence comes it? I feel a thirst, and yet know not for what. I would so gladly be gay, so gladly be happy."

"Be good, be serene," said Edla, with fervency.

"Happy, happy! When I hear the birds sing, then I feel that they are joyous. I have seen the countenances of men bright as a sunny day; I have heard young girls full of laughter and exultation; they were happy, they could be joyful. I would so willingly be able to be so too."

"That is not difficult, Nina; but there is something higher than this happiness, something nobler, which teaches us to set small value on the mere passing rush of gladness. Wouldst thou not resemble Him?" Edla pointed to a pic-

ture of the Saviour in the temptation, as he with quiet resolution cast from him the pleasure of the world.

Nina gazed long on the noble picture. "That," said she, "is sublime;—yes, that indicates more than joy, more than happiness;—yet perhaps this happiness is only for the strong. And, Edla, strength is unequally distributed, and so too is enjoyment. Are there not multitudes who strive not after this higher blessedness, without therefore being less good, and less innocent in heart?"

"There are none, Nina, whom we can number amongst great men, but they who practise virtue, who are active in their love for their neighbour, and who labour after knowledge and improvement."

Nina sunk her head upon her hand, and a cloud of sorrow spread itself over her lovely countenance. "I must really be very weak, Edla," sighed she. "I feel nothing in me of the strength which you speak of, and which you yourself possess. I admire and love you; but why do I yearn rather after the lively, joyous pleasures of the world, than after virtue and perfection? Edla, my second mother! do you understand me?"

"Yes, and there was a time when I felt as you do; but that is a sorrowful weakness—I have conquered it."

"Edla, you have felt thus, and have conquered this feeling? You are so strong and quiet! How does one conquer one's weaknesses, Edla?"

"When we unite ourselves with thorough earnestness to a stronger and higher life—to God, or to a clear, vigorous human soul."

"Edla, keep me with you! Let me ever remain with you! I shall then never feel unhappy; I shall near you, grow strong, and become what you will!"

Edla concealed the emotion with which she heard these words, and said, "I believe, Nina, you will soon find a better support than I can be to you; one by whose side you may become more useful in life. Count Ludwig loves you."

A slight shudder passed through Nina. Edla perceived it, and asked with evident disquiet, "But you have no repugnance to him, Nina?"

"No; but he is so stern, so cold; I am never without a fear of him."

“Stern, cold!” repeated Edla. “Dearest Nina, in our effeminate times, any one easily appears so to us, who has an independent, energetic will, and will not follow the humours of others. What I fear, and what my innermost heart most revolts against, is precisely that feebleness and laxity which enslave so many minds; that twilight in the spirit which makes them, that they know not what they would; that they effect nothing; that they perform nothing but for the moment; that they do everything only by halves, feebly and imperfectly, and convert the whole of existence into a phantasmagoria. How different is Count Ludwig! How firm and clear; how vigorous and effective in action! I have known him from his childhood, and know no nobler, no better man. But life has been very harsh towards him, and experiences of the most painful kind have so deeply wounded his heart, that indeed they have infused into his mind some degree of bitterness. He well deserves that a gentle, amiable wife should again reconcile him to life and humanity, for which he earnestly labours. Will my Nina not become his good angel?”

“My will shall be yours, Edla,” said Nina, while her lips touched the arm of her sister. “Talk to me of him; teach me to love him. O! if he be unhappy, if his life be solitary, if he have no one whom he loves, and who loves him again, I will learn to feel tenderness for him, and do everything to make him happy.”

Edla, touched at these words, put her arm round her affectionate sister; but as she well knew how dangerous to her health was every excitement of feeling, she quickly collected herself, and said with her accustomed tranquillity, “What I know of Count Ludwig I will tell you. He will not be angry with me for it, and he deserves indeed that I should make you better acquainted with him than he himself could. You know that he is the eldest son of one of the richest and best families of our country. Splendour, but no joy, no tenderness, surrounded his cradle. His mother never could bear him. His father’s house was a joyless, unhappy home; vanity, immorality, and the most capricious despotism, reigned therein, with all the discomfort which follows in their train. His parents were a torment to each other, and revenged every contention on the poor child.

Violence and injustice were the first experiences of his life. But amid these examples of moral evil, and beneath this melancholy pressure, the heart and sentiments of the boy grew into unwonted excellence. He ever steadfastly loved truth and order. He set himself resolutely in a direction to which everything that surrounded him was utterly opposed. If through this he became stern and reserved, it was because amid seductions of all kinds he stood wholly alone. But presently he was no longer alone: he found a friend, who indeed was poor and of humble station, but endowed by nature with the noblest gifts; a friend of really softer nature than Ludwig, but who appeared to love the good and true as sincerely, and was as energetic and virtuous as himself. Ludwig saw in him a thoroughly perfect character, and attached himself to him with his whole heart and soul.

“Count Ludwig had a yet younger brother, who through the severity of the father was feeble and miserable. He had also a little sister, and the manly boy became from her earliest age the protector of the tender lovely child. He sate by the cradle of this little sister, kissed her little feet, and chased away the flies which disturbed her slumbers. Thus essential to his heart was love. As she grew up, he stood as guardian angel between her and her parents, who as the tyranny of their humour dictated, were equally injurious to her by their indulgence and their severity. The mother died, and Count Ludwig was compelled by the command of his father to make the tour of Europe for the completion of his education. He was in despair at being obliged to leave his sister at an age in which she most required his oversight and assistance, and with the purpose of providing a protector both for her and his unfortunate brother, he introduced his friend into his paternal home in the capacity of tutor. The firmness of his principles, his agreeable social endowments, and the unwonted amiability of his disposition, would, as Count Ludwig hoped, exert an equally happy influence on his father, his brother, and sister; and thus he made over to the guardianship of his friend that which was dearest to him on earth.

“In a year he returned, and found his beloved only sister snatched away from his father’s house, the victim of a horrible death. His father lay on his bed, mortally wounded by a traitor’s hand; and he, he who had perpetrated all this

—the seducer, the murderer, and still more the pitiful robber of a large sum of money—was his friend!—the friend whom he so tenderly loved, and in whom he had confided more than in himself! Ah, Nina! it demands no trivial strength, no little virtue, when, after such experience, a man still remains steadfast in good, still works vigorously for the benefit of mankind.

“The guilty friend lay in confinement, and could produce no evidence of his innocence. The doom of death hovered over his head, when he suddenly escaped from the prison. Count Ludwig pursued him not—he endeavoured to forget him,—that was his revenge!

“The death of his sister left deep traces in his soul. I saw him much at that time, as in consequence of this calamity his mind was seized with a deep melancholy. I saw also how your countenance operated upon him; how, near you, he became by degrees quieter and gentler. You were very young when Count Ludwig lost his sister, and therefore you have probably never heard these circumstances talked of. Ludwig has often said to me, that you were even then his guardian angel, as it was only through you that he could learn again to love life and mankind. Often has he declared to me his earnest wish that you should become his; and it has only been the consideration of your delicate health, and my entreaties, which have withheld him hitherto from explaining himself to you and our father. Tell me now, Nina, is this man worthy of being warmly valued? Would one not wish from one’s heart to see him happy?”

“He is worthy! O, in the highest degree worthy! Edla, I will be worthy of him, and make him happy; and I then shall be happy too. But, Edla, beg of him not to solicit my hand yet, I am still so young. Remove me not yet from you for a long, long time. Guide me, leave me not. There still lies a cloud, as it were, upon me; I still see nothing distinctly; I yet understand neither life nor myself.”

“You will lead a more active life, Nina, and then it will become clearer to you.”

“And shall I be happy? Shall I experience a joyful, cheerful life?”

“Nina, I do wish that you did not ask so much about this. Did they make these anxious inquiries, those distinguished

men of antiquity and the Middle Ages, whom we admire, and who lived alone for good, for the improvement of the world and for heaven?"

"I am weak," said Nina, as she strove with her delicate fingers to stem the forth-gushing tears.

"You are so," answered Edla with a seriousness which sounded like severity. "But, Nina, we ought to be ashamed of our weakness, and exert all our strength to conquer it. It is only poor-spiritedness which bewails without arousing itself. It is dreadful to deserve one's own contempt; but that is the lot of the feeble. He knows not how to govern himself; he does not know the felicity of saying to the vexations of life—'You cannot perplex me;' to its pains—'You cannot crush me.' He repents to-day of the faults which he committed yesterday, and to-morrow commits them again. He will amuse himself and become strong; but the time passes away in empty, indolent wishes. He knows not what battle is, and therefore enjoys no victory. He sees the gulf, and has not power to withdraw from it. How pitiable! how contemptible!—Nina, you turn pale."

"It is nothing, it will go over;—Edla, your words—Edla, do not despise me!" and she looked up to her with folded hands and an agonised look.

"Be composed, be tranquil, my dear child," exclaimed Edla with a tender earnestness, as she arose; "you are not the feeble creature which I portrayed, and will never be. I would not survive the day in which this picture resembled you. Summon up your strength to abhor it, to drive it far, far from you."

"I will, I shall!" said Nina, extending her arms towards her sister, but in the same moment her arms fell, her head drooped, her eyes closed, she slept. Her brow was pure and clear, no pain disturbed her sweet features; but her countenance was deadly pale, and her limbs were stiff and rigid. It was death in his most lovely form. Edna knew this swoon-like sleep, with which Nina in the weak health of her childhood had so often been seized. For years she had now been free from it, and all the more terrifying to Edla was its return just in this moment. But with her peculiar presence of mind she immediately applied every means to repel this

fearful sleep, and she had the indescribable delight, after a short time, to see Nina awake.

"What was that?" demanded Nina anxiously. "Was I again ill, as I used to be? There came over me an inexpressible faintness. Edla, how much disquiet, how much trouble I occasion you!"

"It was nothing, my dear child," answered Edla with a tranquil tone. "Your physical weakness is destitute of all danger. With time, when your life is more active, and you have to care for others, it will totally vanish, and your soul thereby become even stronger. Believe me!"

"I believe you. Why should I not indeed? Was it not you who gave a second time my life? And have I not since then lived wholly through your care, and thought with your thoughts? Ah! when I already lay in my coffin—all still and dark around me, and my little life was closed for this world,—when you came and warmed me with your kisses, and awakened me with your words; when I at length opened my eyes and again beheld the light and you—then I became yours, my Edla; my life was your gift, and I felt that my whole future lay in your hands. And thus it is still, Edla; I can have no other thought, no other wish, than to obey your will, and to do everything as you will have it!"

"Thou art my heart's child!" said Edla kindly; "but we have this evening too much excited each other, and that is not right. Go now to rest. I am not sleepy; I will seat myself by your bed, and read to you till you are asleep."

Nina assented, rejoiced by the promise.

And what did Edla probably read to her? "Without doubt a sermon, to send her morally to sleep; or the heathen mythology, with a view of strengthening her weak sister right emphatically through the deeds of the Asar!"—here probably exclaims Miss Witty. Be still wittier, thou witty one! Edla read with a lively delivery from Madame Lengren's life-like writings; and Nina fell asleep with a cheerful smile upon her lips. Then paused Edla, and stooped towards her sleeping sister, contemplating with transport her angel-countenance, in which peace and innocence had at this moment mingled themselves into the most affectionate expression. Involuntarily she folded her hands, and prayed out of an ardent heart:

“O my God! watch over her! strengthen her weakness! defend her! Give me strength to guide her to good, to the life which is in Thee. She is the child of my heart, of my cares; enable me to subdue the weakness which I feel for her; give me strength to conduct her to Thee, if it be even through suffering.”

Nina moved, and whispered imploringly, “Mina—Mina, come.” There was something in these words which gave Edla pain, but glancing up towards heaven she went on:

“Grant that she love me. Hear me; and instil into her somewhat of that tenderness for me which I feel for her!”

“Mina, come!” repeated Nina, still more importunately than before.

Edla continued: “If it be possible, let me be continually about her, continually watch over her. Lay, O God! on my shoulder that cross which she ought to bear; give me her sorrows, if it be possible. Protect her! Bless her!”

“Edla!” now said Nina, with the tenderest expression.

“Let her days be serene, her way be smooth; O Almighty One! give her happiness even here upon earth! But if this lie not in Thy all-wise counsel, and she may become better through trials and afflictions—O then strengthen her to bear them! Mould her to Thy will, Father, in joy and in sorrow, in life and in death. Make her Thine only!”

Nina’s sleep was uneasy. Edla now also went to bed, but no slumber fell upon her eyelids; she passed the whole night in thought about Nina, disquieted herself about her, and listened to her breathing. Frequently it seemed to her that this became continually fainter; she arose softly and approached her sister’s bed, but when she finally perceived by the light of the night-lamp that Nina’s lips wore an increasingly richer colour, and felt her fresh breath on her cheek like a blessed greeting, she turned away and thanked God.

We also will salute with her the dawning day, and ask what it brings of news.

CHAPTER II.

NEWS.

What news ? what news ?—ENNUYE.

MORNING came, and with it a letter to Edla, which extremely surprised her, as it bore the hand of the President ; but how much more was she astonished at its contents. It informed her of the betrothal of her father with the Countess Natalie M. The President stated to her that he must this day be absent, and had concluded to give her this intelligence by writing, as he feared lest at the first moment she might feel unpleasantly affected by it. He expressed himself to his daughter with the most amiable candour on a step which he probably did not himself find wholly in accordance with that consistency and prudence on which his whole life long he had professed to set so high a value.

“ Many things come to pass,” wrote the President, “ of which one can give no exact account. But the thing once done, the wisest course is always to turn the best side towards you. I cannot expect, my dear child, that my house will in future offer me a greater charm than your affectionate care has diffused through it ; I am sure, indeed, you will carry that still further. The talents of the amiable Countess M. will only add to it a higher splendour. Her wealth will place me in the position to give to our Nina a more befitting dowry. The Countess is enchanted with her, and perfectly happy to be able to regard her as her daughter. You, my Edla, will, I hope, find in the Countess a friend, and an associate equally enlivening for you as your friendship will be agreeable to her ; and I praise heaven when I think that love and friendship will brighten with a still more beautiful union than hitherto my family circle, and spread a clearer sunshine over my declining days. Should you, my dear daughter, also wish to marry, you see now that on my account you may be perfectly easy. If you do not wish it—if you prefer to remain with me—I can assure you from the bottom of my heart that it meets my dearest wish, and will be a genuine joy to
 “ YOUR GRATEFUL FATHER.”

Edla kissed with warmth the last words of the letter ; and so vivid was the feeling of satisfaction which it afforded her,

that this at first nullified in great measure the unpleasant impression which this betrothal was calculated to make upon her. It returned, however, speedily enough; and Edla could not contemplate this unexpected, this great change, without the most painful sentiment. She was acquainted with the Countess M., and knew well how expert she was to fascinate and to rule; that in every company she was the leading star; but she knew equally well that with her could be neither repose nor comfort, and that the life which she diffused was without happiness for any one. She trembled for the peace of her father; for Nina's good. By degrees, however, her accustomed resignation triumphed, and she opposed to the inevitable that quiet power which always brings repose. With this she hastened to meet her father when he returned home in the evening, embraced him, and tenderly wished him happiness.

He felt a tear on his cheek, and this token of warm feeling, so unusual to Edla, touched him deeply. Confused, and at the same time moved, he assumed a tone between mirth and emotion, joked and sighed alternately, and really did not rightly know how he should behave. He repeated again nearly that which Edla had already read in his letter, only representing more at large how his higher rank brought with it also higher claims—how he was obliged to see and to represent more people, and the like. For all this his present property was not fully adequate; and moreover, he was averse to burdening Edla with a mode of life so totally opposed to her inclinations, so utterly antagonistic to her favourite pursuits; and therefore—and therefore—he had held it for the best, had regarded it as a duty, to unite himself to the Countess M., whose character and talents were in all these respects admirable.

Edla said nothing, was quiet and thoughtful; but when the President at last remained sticking fast in a confused cough, she felt the necessity of reconciling him to himself.

“May she make my father happy,” said Edla, “and then she will be dear and precious to us all; and much that is pleasant will certainly come with her into our house. Nina will now have a better teacher in Italian and for the harp than we could procure for any money. Countess M. will certainly instruct her admirably.”

"Splendidly! divinely!" exclaimed the President, who now began to breathe, and saw the most unheard-of advantages for his daughter in this match. He now dilated upon it with correspondent zeal, became quite gay and elated, and persuaded himself more and more that he was offering up his accustomed repose solely for the education of his daughter.

O ye most excellent little contingencies, which accommodate yourselves to great and little follies, which give weight to the unsubstantial, which sweeten the bitter, even enliven misfortune, and bring us into good understanding with ourselves! ye sweet trifles and convenient words, how amiable is it of you that you come to the aid of the benevolent heart, and offer yourselves at the very moment of need! ye are the little pages of Queen Good-heart, and fleet and beautiful are they as the god of love! When thou readest these lines, dear H., think that they are dedicated to thee!

When the betrothal of the President became known, it produced a great sensation and no little astonishment. People wondered and queried what could possibly have induced him in his old age to entertain the idea of such a connexion. Some insinuated that the Countess had offered herself to him; and that out of politeness and surprise he had said Yes. Others affirmed that he had a hard life of it with the old maid Edla, and that she forgot the old father over her books. Others again said, that the President rushed into this marriage in order to mend his deranged affairs—an opinion that one often hears. But we, who have some knowledge of the state of things, whisper into the ear of the reader, that the President had had a trifling skirmish with—Cupid, and the rogue had given him a tolerably smart wound.

Many wondered that the Countess M., she who was so rich and still so beautiful, should give her hand to an old man. This was answered with the assertion, that she only sought through this to win entrance to the Court; and others whispered that she purposed by this match nothing but the punishment of an undecided lover. Sentimentality asserted that it was an old inclination which had existed between his Excellency and the Countess in the tender days of childhood, and now suddenly blazed up into a marriage-torch. We are so free as to believe that there need no such weighty reasons for people getting married; nay, most generally there requires

really no reason at all. We believe that people often fall into courtship just because they have nothing else to do.

In certain matrimonial alliances, especially in such as are concluded between people *comme il faut*, there is so inconceivably little of love and wooing to speak of, that one cannot come fast enough to the wedding. This is the case here, and so to business.

CHAPTER III.

See here the bride, how sweet, how prim!—
The loving bridegroom—look at him!

The Wedding Guest.

CONFECTIONS, lights, and a great company, the wedding ceremony, the clergyman, very fashionable and influential witnesses, congratulations and compliments, champagne and drinking of healths, such is the table of contents of the whole tribe of weddings—and of this amongst them.

“What! are we to be put off in this paltry way?” I hear my female readers exclaim. “First you invite us to a delectable treat, and then when it comes to the table it is nothing but an every-day dish!”

“My dearest! I feel it; I have sinned against the President and against you, but I cannot now help it: the festivals of life, coronations, weddings, and the like, have really no living colours in my soul. A solitary morning hour at the rising of the sun,—a sigh out of the oppressed bosom,—the hand-grasp of two friends in the last moment of existence,—these give thoughts, these make the heart beat, and the pen fly—but——”

“But a wedding? A moment in which two hearts, two immortal souls unite in the name of God!”

“Amen! that is certainly divine!—if they do not say on this day ‘yes’ to each other, in order the rest of their whole lives through to say ‘no!’ But now I am criminating myself still worse, since I blacken the whole of human nature. Let us go back to the wedding; and that which passes there, thou, O reader! shalt learn.”

In the first place admire the bride! With her five-and-forty years—now I am perpetrating high treason against her!—God be merciful to me, a sinner!—she is yet beautiful to admiration. Her figure is slender and majestic; her com-

plexion of a dazzling fairness, which through a delicate addition of real carmine, is the more heightened. O! I am really to-day in a shocking way! Her bearing is noble; one sees that she is accustomed to please and to command. Her attire is in the highest degree splendid; jewels glitter in her hair; jewels adorn her bosom and arms. And what lace! yes, and I know not besides. With what dignity she kneels to receive the blessing; with what a tranquil majesty she again rises! A lofty grace reigns in all that she does and permits; towards her new consort she displays a gentle condescension. Her eyes frequently rest with an expression of tenderness and admiration on Nina, who, clad in white crape, her shining hair arranged as by an elfin hand, calls forth in every spectator the involuntary exclamation of "Angel!" The bride desires that Nina shall constantly sit near her, and regards her entirely as her property.

The President appears by no means disadvantageously. He is still a right good-looking man; has an excellent bearing, and if his figure truly has acquired something of the *embonpoint* of age, it by no means yet converts him into an old man. Besides, the blue ribbon of his order spreads a pleasant illusion over it. The star on his breast flashes with brilliants, and the love of the happy bridegroom in his eyes. He keeps constantly near his spouse; he carries her shawl, he suffers her not out of his sight; but all with decorum. He gives not the slightest opportunity for satire; a man is not his Excellency, and gentlemanlike and stately for nothing.

And Edla is also splendidly attired, and really with as much taste as expense. She knows that it will give her father pleasure. Her manner is simple and quiet; she is courteous to all, and friendly to her step-mother, who behaves to her with the most bewitching courtesy. Edla's glances rest occasionally on Nina; she seeks to conceal a weight of uneasiness. Professor A. is near her, and talks animatedly, yet more of her than with her.

The rest of the company form various silent groups. We will attach ourselves to one not quite so silent, and where the reader, moreover, will renew a former acquaintance.

Baron H. seats himself as commodiously as possible in an easy chair near Miss Greta, who, truly, is something older

and stouter than when we saw her last, yet is still even a very pretty and agreeable apparition, and has preserved, amid the manifold annoyances of life and time, her beautiful teeth, her white hands, and her good humour.

Baron H. is always seeking a wife, as he says, with or without money; he expends, however, now more care on his person, and has acquired a yet keener eye for the world, still greater goodness of heart and more cheerfulness. Such things will happen. Baron H. and Miss Greta are infinitely rejoiced to meet each other.

“Now, my gracious lady,” said Baron H., after the first salutations, “which of us could possibly have imagined fourteen years ago, as we were together with his late Excellency von G., that we should find ourselves on the same day of the same month at this festivity? Then Miss Adelaide, now the Countess Alarik W., was in her loveliest bloom. But good heavens! why is she not here? What do you say? Prevented? ha! ha! so! so! I understand. Well, well, that is quite in order. I congratulate. And the little, discreet Mamselle Rönquist—a most agreeable person, she not here either? She is prevented? Heavens!—what do you say? Ah, yes! she is with the Countess Alarik; nurses her and the children; quite right, most beautiful! I think when one has character and consistency, and has been fourteen years in the same house, the children of the house must become almost one’s own. Apropos of the Countess Adelaide,—what do you think of her sister, Miss Nina?”

“I confess,” answered Miss Greta, “that I consider her to be the most beautiful creature that God has created, only she is too ethereal—so to say—almost altogether too little human, too supernatural. One fears that she should suddenly dissolve in air.”

“Quite right! quite right! I also love a little more flesh and blood. I should not like a wife whom I feared would go to pieces if I took hold of her. But it is true though, there is in her something perfectly bewitching. One involuntarily follows her with admiration, and one’s eyes and thoughts cannot tear themselves away from her. There is, as it were, a veil of melancholy over her which one would gladly draw aside to learn the sweet mystery of her sorrow,

which must have something charming in it, since it affects the heart rather than saddens it. One sees that it is produced by no present pain. It resembles rather a trouble whose cup has long been drained, or a dark foreboding of future woes. God protect the sweet child! It must really be a devil which could give her pain. Pity that she is so pale; she is actually marble white, and yet there occasionally passes over her a gleam—see there, how even now it tinges her with the roseate glow of the ascending sun.”

“Nay,” exclaimed Miss Greta, laughing, “that will never do! I counsel you in all earnestness not to look so much at her, or you will become totally enchanted. You already talk so poetically, that I scarcely recognise you again. Bestow rather your attention on your neighbour.”

“Most willingly, my gracious friend! But who is the young lady who sits yonder so still and tranquil? An agreeable creature, she looks so modest.”

“You are remarkably obliging this evening: I am persuaded she is a very discreet person, but a little too still and wearisome for me. For this reason, I am not very well acquainted with her. She is called Clara S., and is a legacy of my cousin’s, which one of her learned friends some months ago bequeathed to our lovely bride. The girl is poor, the Countess therefore is looking about for a good match for her, and will give her a good fortune.”

“Not at all amiss! a right good idea! And the damsel is actually very charming. She might really make a wife for me, if she, *nota bene*, were sensible enough to be willing to have me. She looks as though she would become a most clever housewife, and when she is more closely observed, she is also very pretty—she has something that one at first overlooks—something—I might say, holy.”

“Nay, nay, Baron! you go sadly too far to-day. You fall in love actually with everybody, and see angels and saints in the most ordinary mortals. Take an ice and come to yourself.”

“Just as you will. But I could not avoid admiring the young lady in her incomparable repose. She seems to live in the state which La Bruyere calls the Golden Age; she troubles herself about no one, and desires that no one should

trouble himself about her. Madame W., with her bird-of-paradise, does not look half so care-free. That must be a very pleasant, a very peculiar condition."

"It might be very well for the Golden Age, in which people had probably other *agrémens* at hand, that one knows nothing of now; but in our time, and in our societies, I praise him who is not heavy and wearisome. I have often been in company with Clara, and have not heard a syllable from her besides yes or no. Absurdities and follies are a thousand times preferable to this murderous monotony."

"How charming you must find Miss F., who never sits still for a moment, and talks everlastingly at random."

"Nay, she does not delight me at all; she is intolerable, and a genuine plague; Clara pleases me still better. Do you know F.?"

"A little. Her father belongs to those people who appear to believe that daughters must cost nothing at all, and ought to come into the world in an economical fashion, just like the lambs with their ready-made woollen garb on their backs. This notion operates most injuriously on the life and disposition of the girls. They can but seldom come into society, and when they are there they behave like wild sheep."

"I pity her sincerely, and wish from my heart that the father may alter his theory, or that the daughters may improve themselves at home."

"Amen! But see only, I beseech you, the Generalska P. there in the blue satin dress. Have you ever beheld such a complexion, and such a figure, at full fifty years of age? And, notwithstanding, she has had many a care and many a trouble in life. Do you know what it is that, through all this, has preserved her so youthful and so cheerful?"

"I am full of curiosity!"

"Yes, my most gracious lady, when one considers *what* it is which helps the majority of the people through the world, one falls on the most whimsical ideas——"

"To the point, to the point; we will afterwards think of the ideas. I now am impatient to learn the beauty-wash of the Generalska P."

"I tell you first what it is not, and then you will probably guess it yourself. It is not religion, not philosophy—and, although she may be a thoroughly good and discreet woman,

it is not the life of society—not domestic happiness, for I have these confessions from herself;—now, tell me what it is.”

“If these questions related to a man I should answer—a good stomach; but as the subject is a lady, and one too with such a complexion, I say—a good sleep.”

“Quite right—excellent! that is it! But how acute you are. Yes, she sleeps so sound and fast, that in the morning she scarcely knows what occurred to her the evening before. A good sleep!—that is her whole philosophy. She is really a totally different kind of creature to Miss Edla, who, amid all her dusty books, is not become a whit livelier or handsomer. Yes, her immeasurable nose——”

“Edla,” said Miss Greta, with a tone which cut short jesting, “Edla is a person of whom I entertain the highest opinion; and she is also, when you talk with her alone, extremely agreeable.”

“Heavens! I have the very greatest love—; yes, seriously, I have sincere love and esteem for her. I am persuaded that she is an excellent person;—I was merely observing how various the classes are.”

“And do you know that even the lovely Nina has had an unusually learned education. It is said that she studies mathematics, political economy, and——”

“God defend us! Yes, then I wonder no longer that the bud is so delicate. Who could become fat upon political economy? I am convinced that Miss Clara understands nothing of political economy, but certainly all the more of house economy; and I would wager that she will, after all, have more lovers than the beautiful Nina.”

“I must confess that I have not the taste of those lovers. I hold rather with Count Ludwig R., who encircles Nina with the majestic gyrations of the hawk.”

“Ah, yes, quite right, like the hawk, that is the true word. He is a cursedly able and practical man; but he has, in fact, something of the nature of the bird of prey. I would not willingly be his wife, spite of his wealth and high rank.”

“What are you talking about? Is he not universally acknowledged to be one of the most distinguished men? I have always heard him spoken of as a model of perfection, which, by the by—between ourselves—is my antipathy;

partly because I have no faith in them, and partly because such model-shapes are commonly excessively wearisome. They say he is a man without a fault!"

"Ah, my most gracious! Perhaps he has nothing of those which the world in general term faults, but on the other hand so many failings that there is probably a whole ship-load of them. Between us be it said—he is a man without a heart, and his justice carries only a sword. But hark! how lively the conversation is. And the new couple have only eyes and ears for each other. One must confess it is very edifying. Wedlock, my gracious lady, is the most honourable institution, and a real heaven on earth. A good wife, as king David says, is more precious than gold and pearls."

"Perhaps David has said it too," replied Miss Greta, who was quite at home in her Bible, "but I know to a certainty that king Solomon has."

"Very true! *père et fils* say commonly the same thing, which testifies to the wisdom of both. But I assure you, my gracious one, that my future wife shall never rue the day on which she takes me for her husband. No one will more highly esteem her, no one be more zealous to meet her wishes than I."

"I believe you, my best Baron; but wherefore do you not prove that by the deed?"

"My gracious young lady, why did you, ten years ago, just as I was about to follow your advice, give me a basket?"

Miss Greta was somewhat embarrassed, but collected herself and proceeded calmly.

"I am curious to hear, how as a married man you would pass your time?"

"You are quite too good; but I honestly confess that I have not yet settled anything positively on this head. I mean to ask the advice of my wife on it. The only thing which flows distinctly before me is, that we shall begin our days with getting up, and conclude them by going to bed."

"Well," said Miss Greta, "that sounds, at least, new, and is by no means trivial. I wish you luck, Baron, of these new and very original ideas! According to these fundamental principles I cannot doubt but that your married life will be pre-eminently happy; especially——" Miss Green hesitated.

"Well, especially?" demanded the Baron, full of curiosity.

“Especially for your wife, as your house is already blessed with a ‘FILIUS,’” continued Miss Greta, with a sarcastic look and tone.

This word had the singular effect of throwing the Baron into obvious embarrassment, and he answered with a degree of excitement—

“Quite right! quite right! and if she be not satisfied with that, I can also be satisfied without her.”

Miss Greta looked a little offended. The Baron arose, and betook himself to a yawning group.

But my dear reader, I fear that thou also yawnest, and hast found thyself *ennuyéd*; but in every-day life this is now and then not to be avoided. Sometimes, however, one can exert extraordinary means against this, and free oneself from it by force. On thy account, my dear reader, whom I am only too anxious to keep in good humour, I will now exercise one of my magic arts—I break up the company, put out the lights, terminate the wedding, and send everybody to bed.

And now it is night! Sleep with its soft wings touches the eyes of men, and their souls dream themselves away into the land of wonders. The lawyer forgets his suits, the labourer the toils of the day, the man of the world the tedium of his festivities, the unfortunate the occasion of his tears; all through thee, sweet blessing, rich sleep! But if thou findest eyes which thou canst not close, which pain and care keep open till the very brain becomes numbed and the heart bleeds,—oh then, go, gentle sweet sleep! and beseech thy pale brother to come, for he is the true physician.

Perhaps, my reader, thou thinkest that I, on this flight which has led me so far from my aim, have myself fallen into sleep and dreams. In order, therefore, to testify that it is not so, I will immediately commence a new chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

EDLA.

MANY are younger in heart and in enjoyment of life at forty than at twenty years of age; so was it with Edla. Her bearing, however, bore rather the impress of repose and firmness than of what might be called the pleasures of life. Her glance was still and penetrating; no one attempted to explore

its depths. One felt that the soul which spoke out of it had fought its way to peace; that it lay not in indolent ease, but went seeking and inquiring after the reality of life. Yes; Edla had indeed combated!—traces of deep suffering, not to be mistaken, lay in her countenance and in the half-suppressed sighs which often heaved her bosom. But this might have been as it would; now all was overcome, tranquillised, and reconciled,—all was become good. In silence had she wrestled and endured. No one could relate her agonies; she herself least of all.

We left Edla fourteen years ago, when she made her first acquaintance with more solid learning. She pursued this path with earnestness and zeal. She thirsted after knowledge and truth. Her glance was directed with an earnest inquiry up towards heaven, or downward into the depths of science and of her own heart; thus she lived quiet, happy days! and her soul filled itself with the most cheering hopes. All at once, however, her solitary, speculative life was suddenly disturbed. Her little sister Mina died, and Nina fell into a sickly consumptive state, not unusual in a twin which is suddenly deprived of the sister soul, the half of its own life. Edla saved her from death; and from this moment a profound sympathy for the tender creature engrossed her whole heart. She called her her child, and would not allow her to be any more taken away from her. Mamselle Rönquist had left the President's house, and followed Adelaide. Nina therefore was committed to the sole care of Edla, and Edla became her mother. She divided her time betwixt her, her father, and her books.

Live books for ever! But who becomes through books alone wise? What does the man when the thirst of knowledge seizes him? In his youthful years he betakes himself to the university, attends learned lectures, and lays the foundation of all knowledge. He reads, he smokes, and scratches his head—one does not believe that this last operation contributes to the development of ideas. He disputes with his comrades—an excellent exercise for reason and the lungs. Life, motion, emulation, leagues of friendship, great teachers, early helps to any science, yes, the very academical atmosphere which he breathes—all these contribute to enoble his feelings, to nourish his ideas, and to advance him to

“**MAGISTER.**” Is the laurel garland won, and the thirst of knowledge still strong as ever, he can drain, in order to compose himself, a mighty flagon—the world! On the summit of Mont Blanc, he can explore the mysterious regions of the stars; in the depths of Golconda’s mines, he can dig gold; can sail with Captain Ross round the North Pole; and on the coast of Terra del Fuego admire the setting sun; can read in Iceland the Runic inscriptions, and in India Sanscrit; can explore the ruins of Asia, and the new States of America. The palaces of kings and the dark abodes of criminals stand open to him; to the study of the learned he has free ingress. Fortunate fellow! ought he not to be enlightened? ought he not to know everything in the world?

Edla was two-and-twenty years old before she learned to think and work with the very slightest degree of method at any system whatever. An unsatisfactory, empty, and patchwork time lay behind her, and therefore—honour and success to the philanthropic principles of the present time, especially in regard to the education of woman! For dear, sagacious reader, who can avoid observing how different, how unlike it now stands with the opportunities, as well as the means, of acquiring solid knowledge? There is no need for me to point out the difference; it stands forward of itself before our eyes. Perhaps it does, perhaps it must be so—I don’t know; but it has often seemed to me as if Nature had given thereto her peculiar, silent confirmation; and if it be so, then, good and wise mother, thy daughter will willingly follow thee, and thou wilt probably draw her closer to thy own bosom. Certain it is, that Edla perceived most perfectly the fetters which bound her aspiring spirit; and hence the change in her condition. She looked at her father—he had now, more than ever, need of her; she contemplated the child which she had snatched from death, and she did what so many before her had done, and so many will do after her—she resigned herself. And this sacrifice of the development of her mind and heart—perhaps the greatest which man can make—this she accomplished after a short struggle, stepped forth from her solitude, and joined herself quietly and kindly to the family circle.

Perhaps Edla’s sacrifice was less great than she herself believed. I have already said that we do not become wise

through books alone. No! not through books, not through travel, not through clever people, not through the whole world, if we do not carry in ourselves the slumbering power which calls forth from the individual parts the harmonious shape; or, to speak more simply, if we do not understand how from words to produce deeds. But this activity was to Edla the beautiful gift of God; and if we are disposed still to charge her with a certain one-sided view of the world, let us recollect the circumstances under which she first became acquainted with the world and with life. The impressions of her youth, the bent of her character and mind, had led her with the most fervent love to the earliest philosophical doctrines of the human race. They penetrated deep into her soul, because they were in accordance with its most secret impulses. Nothing had Edla discovered so profound, so true, as the might of destiny, as that inexorable **MUST**, beneath whose iron yoke mortal man must bow, murmuring or willing, resisting or complying, it mattered not—he **MUST**! This impression remained with her, but by degrees assumed a different tone in her soul. She felt still that external **MUST**; but still more strongly felt she the inward power which, as it were, in opposition to the first, develops our proper life, and shapes the heavy stone which weighs on humanity into a step, whence it ascends to the eternal liberty of heaven. She felt that man, like Prometheus bound to the crag, although with a lacerated heart, can yet bid defiance to the power of this world, and from the beginning to the end of this phantasmagorical scene can endure and resolve, still vigorous and unwearied. Edla, indeed, remained the same, and became at the same time different; for she had been strong during the trial, and she was now strong in resignation. Complaint, bitterness, and distrust, departed from her breast. She bowed herself while she kissed the mercifully severe hand which, amid wild tempests, calls forth the imperishable flower of virtue. This became to her the loveliest blossom of humanity and of the whole universe. It wound itself with beautifying effect around every creature; the storms of fate tossed rudely its chalice, but served only to promote its fullest expansion; it turned itself, as the sunflower towards the sun, towards God. Strength, capacity of self-denial, equanimity and repose amid the occurrences of life, purity of heart and of

thought, these lifted her to God—these Edla sought after, and found. Of the sacred doctrines of the Gospel, those chiefly acquired a living power in her heart which more especially favoured this bias; and her view of the world led her to regard man as ordained, before all things, to combat and self-denial. But this view of the world was clear and cheerful; the laurel of victory succeeded the trial, and the crown of thorns became the crown of glory. She travelled with rejoicing the path of necessity, and fulfilled her duties from the bottom of her heart. Was this path disagreeable and wearisome, she regarded it not. She continued immovable, and went with firm steps towards the great day of change, in which the soul, freed from sin and the burden of earth, ascends to the everlasting light, to the origin of all life and all love.

But still how came it that she, endowed with this strength and this inward peace, was not more agreeable to others?

Others! yes, if there were no others, one might truly be more at peace with one's self—only that it is difficult to say what one then properly should be. Edla had now reached the years in which the soul renders itself most independent of the body; in which external beauty or ugliness are of no further importance, and only in a subordinate degree affect the weal and woe of existence. For Edla this feeling was more influential than for many others; but her youthful days had left behind them too deep traces in her soul, and the clouds which lay upon the morning of her days threw long and broad shadows over her whole life. She had still always a great mistrust of the impression which she made upon others. She was too firmly persuaded that she could not please; she feared even that she never could be beloved, for she believed her exterior, her person, her disposition, to operate repulsively. This persuasion, some pride, the fear of being wearisome, but still more, that of exciting even in amiable, good men one disagreeable feeling,—all this made her somewhat shy towards her fellow-creatures. But in this she did herself injustice, for amongst those of her nearer acquaintance there were few who were more amiable than herself; and even in the most splendid social circles there are always many who forget the shell for the sake of the kernel. But this very reserve injured her; people feared her, because they

could not love her. In company on all occasions she was silent, and thus she continued as a stranger to the life and enjoyments of others. Ah, friendly reader! if this be our case, if we are sufficiently sensible of it, "IS IT NOT THEN BETTER TO CONTINUE SOLITARY?"

Happy are they who do so with joy; happy are they who find therein their happiness. It was thus with Edla. Her aspiring soul soared to life and enjoyment in a higher home. She found it in the stars, with whose courses she was familiar; she found it in the sacred groves of philosophy. From hence she saw light spread itself over the world; from hence she drew peace with it and with herself. It is true that Edla lived rather in the ideal than in the actual world. She resembled rather the bird-of-paradise which hovers above the earth, than the nightingale which builds its nest close to its bosom and sings. The consequence of this was, that she knew men better than humanity; the heaven better than the earth. Above all things loved she the truth; merit she knew how to value, and errors to pardon; but from all effeminacy and laxity, from all egotism and bitterness, she turned with repugnance. And yet was Edla mild; I have known no one—one man excepted—who was so mild as she. She was severe against weaknesses, but she judged them not; she was angry with the thing, but not the person. Only towards herself was Edla severe, and besides herself towards one other creature—and this was the child of her care—the darling of her heart—Nina. Nina must not be weak; she must do involuntarily the good and the right, since she had not, like so many, the excuse of a weak and neglected education. Nina was nourished with the very milk of reason. Nina must not totter and waver in the path of virtue; and therefore was Edla strict with her, and therefore did she love her more than herself. Distrustful as she was of the regard of others, she yet had confidence in Nina's love. And how could it be otherwise? Had not Edla given to her all her heart and her acquirements? And Nina's childlike acquiescence, the necessity of being always with her, her trustful confidence in her guidance, did not these afford the most beautiful testimony of it? The feeling of being so intimately united to so beautiful and amiable a being brought many an earthly delight into her transcendental existence. All the ideal beauty which

Edla in her loftiest visions fashioned forth, she saw, as it were, realised in Nina. And this was in part her own work. When she afterwards beheld Nina so fascinating and enchanting, she was tempted to worship her own creation, and experience all the weaknesses of a mother. But she strove against this weakness, and conquered it. She possessed that deep and powerful love which nourishes its object with its blood to the last drop, and which had rather see the beloved one bleed and perish, than sink and lose itself.

So much for Edla. Now a word upon the favourite.

CHAPTER V.

NINA.

GAZE into a pure fountain at the moment when day divides itself from night; see the magic light of morning at once mirroring itself therein with the heaven and its glittering stars, and thou hast an image of Nina's soul. So pure was she—so gleamed in the depths of her being every eternal truth. But all this sweet splendour broke as through a twilight; it was a foretelling of light, not the light itself. She was as the original man—as man in his innocence—in his first holy beauty. Her soul seemed to be one with the beautiful body; it belonged to it, and appeared molten into it. Her manner possessed that charming repose, which nothing of self-consciousness can counterfeit. Unconstrained but modest, she was still self-collected. It gave a sweet tranquillity to the mind and to the eye to contemplate her. How beautiful and harmonious were the movements of her tender arm, of her fine white hand; her gait how floating, how quiet and noble! It would be difficult to give a description of the beauty and charm of her countenance; but he who had seen the pure, finely arched brow shaded by the soft silken hair, the wonderful eyes beneath their long dark lashes, the small Grecian nose, the bewitching mouth, the sweet oval of the face, and the dazzlingly fair skin,—must have declared with Miss Greta, that she was the loveliest creature of God's creation. Her eyes had the same form as those of her sister Adelaide, but with a much less lively glance. Over Nina's dark-blue eyes lay, as it were, a mist, a moist twilight, whose magic was indescribable. Something pensive, some-

thing dreamy, lay in her glance. No clear day, no gay life, spoke out of it; but something foreboding, something of an inward emotion. When she listened to the words of another, she had the most amiable expression of present sympathy, and when she answered in her own manner, rather slowly, but in the most delicious tones of voice, one learned then to estimate one of the most beautiful, but commonly most neglected, of God's gifts to man.

All the world talks now-a-days of education, and wherefore should not I?—that is, of Nina's. She had been a child, and was now a blooming maiden, and had read few of the so-called children's books, and no romances at all, neither those of Madame Genlis, nor of La Fontaine. She did not therefore live in the error that every good deed, every virtuous action, immediately receives the highest reward here below. She had not been taught that in the fulfilment of the most ordinary Christian duties, a lover would be peeping through a crack of the door or listening at the keyhole, and must become enraptured at the sight. She thought little about the "*qu'en dira-t-on?*" since neither by romances nor by the gossip of the day was she led into the habit of living according to the thoughts and opinions of others. She had not studied men on the petty theatre of social life. On the contrary she had early contemplated them on the great stage of the world. In her younger years, Edla had made her familiar with the great and beautiful characters of history, with the sublime doctrines of the wise. She feared not to allow Nina to behold the naked actuality of life; but she showed it to her in a higher light, and from a more commanding point of view. She permitted her to behold virtue suffering, the wise rejected and contemned; she displayed to her life in all its greatness and all its bitterness. She wished that Nina should love virtue without selfish motives; and the wish was accomplished; she loved virtue on account of its own beauty; and as her mind was constantly occupied with truth and excellence, she herself became true and excellent. Edla thought—"I will make her at home on the heights of humanity; I will strengthen her gaze through purity and clearness, so that when she descends into the ordinary world, her eyes may not be dazzled with earthly splendour, nor her soul become fettered with paltry bonds. She shall stand in the world as a

high and better creature: she shall not degrade herself to the little and the common, but shall draw them up towards herself; she shall ennoble everything which surrounds her. She shall become happy through the felicity which belongs to the noble human being—who is master of himself, who is exalted above every earthly trouble, and who maintains his own peace, freedom, and strength in life as in death, striving only after the eternal.

In the same manner Edla sought to cultivate Nina's sense of beauty. She became early acquainted with the most beautiful and noble in form and tone; but Edla led her rather to plastic art than to music, whose exciting tones seized too keenly on her feelings, and hence she was frequently seen sketching the head of a Muse or a Jupiter, a Holy Mary, or a patient Christ. But no Ariadne in tears, no Hercules in the madness of pain, was a subject for her pencil. Everything effeminate, passionate—everything which displayed the confusion of the soul and of human reason, Edla kept at a distance, as unworthy of her. She wished to develop in Nina reason rather than fancy—exactly the reverse of that which is usually done; she desired to call forth and to confirm her strength, ere yet she made acquaintance with the shattering agitations of feeling. For this reason she banished from the presence of Nina all disquiet, everything passionate. She prescribed to herself quiet and self-command; and, in order to moderate the excessive softness and excitability of her sister's character, she even put under restraint the tenderness which she felt for this beloved being; yes, she even discouraged the innocent caresses of the child, and never responded to them. Perhaps Edla might have another reason for this, of which the following circumstance may afford us a hint.

One day Edla's friend, Professor A., was with her. The little nine-year-old Nina drew close to her, and sought to stretch up to her her charming little mouth. Edla repelled this caress to the evident trouble of the little one.

"How can you so restrain yourself, as not to kiss the rose?" asked softly the Professor.

"Shall she inherit this?" answered Edla, as she pointed to her own constantly cracked and sore lip.

Oh, had Edla but completed what she began! Had not the weakness, the impropriety of another—but we will not

anticipate. We have already said how Nina, through the teaching and example of Edla, acquired so much power over herself as to conquer her natural indolence; how she learned diligence through the diligence of Edla; and notwithstanding this, how she was frequently seized with a dreaming melancholy mood, which was so much the more disquieting to Edla, because it was in immediate connexion with the extreme delicacy of her health,—we have therefore for the present said enough. Nina's soul was like a temple in which the worship of the divinity has not yet commenced; a world over which no sun has yet arisen. Warmth, this higher life, was yet wanting.

But some will think, what then said the President to one of the chickens receiving what he called "A learned education?"

CHAPTER VI.

THE PRESIDENT.

THE President was converted by Edla; and through her had arrived at the conviction, that a higher intellectual accomplishment only rendered a wife more agreeable and happy in her own house. Since Edla had given up her earlier speculative life, she had laid upon herself the duty of making the old age of her father joyful; for his sake she found it easy completely to change her serious taciturn nature. With him she was lively and talkative, and she performed this task so beautifully, that the old gentleman found himself almost more comfortable in his house, than in the time of his late Frederika. By degrees he acquired an actual tenderness for his daughter, and a confidence so entire in her, that he gave her not only perfect freedom in the arrangement of household affairs, but also in the education of the little Nina. The President hoped through this to obtain in the younger daughter, a child as observant and tender as was the elder, and thus everything went on admirably till the President had the affair with little Cupid, and began to talk of the grave, in order to step over to a wedding.

I have now the greatest desire, dear reader, after the lapse of fourteen years, to cast a glance at Adelaide. Before all things must I mention their eight children; all extra-

ordinarily pretty, good, and joyous as the mother. She had nursed them all herself, tended them, and played with them; from her they learned to love the sun, gladness, and God, and to look up to papa as to a gospel. Count Alarik lived only for his wife, whom he adored,—for his children, whom he assisted to educate,—for his people, whom he made happy. The mother gave them gentleness and gladness of heart; from the father they learned history, and many other good things. Mamselle Rönquist instructed the three daughters in French and English. None could compare with Nina; but they promised to be good and merry, and to pass happily through the world. Adelaide devoted very much time to her children; yet she continued for many others “a song of joy,” indispensable at all festivities; and wherever her kind, fair countenance showed itself, under lowly roof or in lofty castle, by the bed of death or at the festive marriage-board, there was she greeted as a messenger of heaven sent forth with consolation and joy. She was still the swan of whiteness, freshness, slenderness, and grace, and the happiness of her home was the living well in which she bathed her wings.

Of Alarik and Adelaide it might be said with Job: “They increase in goods. Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their house is safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.”

In a word, they belonged to the fortunate of this earth. I have seen many such, and have admired their world. Others die in the bitterness of their souls, and have never eaten with pleasure.

But—“Who shall teach God?”

CHAPTER VII.

AND ANGELICA?

So asked many, as the Countess M., after an absence of two years, returned from Rome without her.

Rare are they on earth who live out their whole life, and

fully perfect their powers, so that they are able in continually holier forms to bring forth the treasures which lie in their souls. They are the heroes of life's drama, the great geniuses of the earth.

But life has also voiceless geniuses. They think deeply, they feel most fervently; but they find no words to give back those divine images which their eye and ear daily drink in. They pass by without being understood; like silent shadows they hasten away. Let us look on them with pity and reverence, for they are the most unhappy amongst the children of the earth. But we know that an angel will hereafter loosen their tongues.

There are also beings who live only a moment; but to whom is given the blessed gift, through a deed or a word, long to live in the memory of mankind. These also are rare on the earth. Their life is rich, but short; a dithyrambic sung in the temple of immortality.

Angelica belonged to these last. Her fiery soul speedily consumed the earthly material, and the unremitting diligence with which she laboured in Rome exhausted her strength before its time. She died, with the pencil in her hand, while she was engaged in giving the last touches to the portrait of an angel who comes with a heavenly greeting to Mary. She departed to approach nearer to the original forms of that beauty which she had imagined and adored on earth.

This painting, her farewell remembrance to the world, is in the possession of the Countess M. No one contemplates it without deep emotion. Especially can no wife gaze on Mary without saying with her from a humble heart: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord!" No one sees the picture without faith in a higher purity and glory. A beam of heaven rests upon it, and lifts the soul on high. Angelica lived not in vain.

And who that has striven ardently, and laboured honestly, has lived in vain?—if it be only for a brief morning hour! He works out no whole, but the spark which proceeds from him warms and enlightens the night of many a mortal. He has prepared the work for others, and this also is good and cheering.

Our little life, how soon is it past! Let us become useful to each other, and it will be immortal even upon earth!

And the tender Otto? and the wicked Countess Augusta? and the lively Baroness? and his Excellency her husband? They are all, each and every one of them, dead of the cholera.

CHAPTER VIII.

FASHIONABLE LIFE.

Drink ye, the fleeting, the sparkling beaded cup, drink!

FRANZÉN.

To what shall I compare fashionable life, that rushing life of feast and splendour, of sport and laughter, out of which seriousness, tears, and sighs, are banished; that life which prevails in all great cities, which draws all into its vortex,—to what shall I compare it? To the foam of life's flagon. It streams up from inexhaustible fountains; the foamy pearls whirl, and wink, and vanish; fresh ones rise to the surface; in the flagon's depth there lives a ceaseless hiss and bubble. One must drink the champagne in full draught, not sip it lightly. But it is always the same in the great tavern of the world. Many a noble life, many a happy fortune, goes down in this eddying element; but at the same time, many a sigh, many an agony, many a spasm of pain, dissolves itself therein. Everything has its good—at least for the moment.

“Drink! they fly, the foaming pearl-drops,—drink!” Many men cannot exist out of this social element, although they now and then draw a deep breath, and sigh from their hearts—edifying strain—“How lovely is nature! How charming is quiet! How glorious the exercise of Christian duties! Without seriousness and repose there is no true joy to be found: man must live for heaven!” And after this tribute of feeling they fly to new pleasures and amusements, and dissipate themselves in all imaginable ways.

The Countess M.—now Countess H.—was one of these worldly natures. Her attachment to Angelica was only one of these breathings out of the customary element of life, to which long before Angelica's death she had returned. She loved the life of the great world, of which, by her beauty and refinement, she was an ornament. Her large estate gave her all the means of living in splendour. She moved in society with the ease of a fish in water, as though in its own element, and floated as agreeably on the surface as in the

depths of the stream of life. She wrote, and received every morning probably twenty notes; she patronised artists and authors, and accepted the dedication of their works. She belonged to all the art-unions and benevolent societies; and loved to intrigue, to recommend, to play a part, to make herself important, to become admired and worshipped, and all this with much success; especially successful was she with those who did not contemplate her too closely. Soon after her marriage she opened her house in the most splendid style; collected around her the most distinguished persons of the city, whether for talent, rank, or beauty; kept every day open house; got up entertainments, plays, concerts, declamations, lectures; always assumed the first and most brilliant rôle, and suffered herself modestly to be styled the *CORINNA OF THE NORTH*.

And now, my beloved reader, thou probably art imagining that I shall conduct thee smoothly right on in my story, as we drive finally into the hall-court, after having been jolted on the rough country road, and seat ourselves at the well-filled table. Nothing of the kind! The passion for running hither and thither, and ever backwards, has for once seized me, and so fall we into a fresh episode; and then—yes, heaven knows what—"and then" will come. Follow me now he that likes it. I betake me to Miss Greta.

Now to what shall I compare Miss Greta? I find no image more applicable to her than a mineral spring. Impetuous and peculiar, fresh and sparkling, and as it were, ferruginous, she contemplated life and men with a glance satirical and yet good-humoured, whilst a friendly smile at the follies of the world played around her fine lips. This view of society, which she expressed without the slightest bitterness in her manner, was irresistible, and so entertaining that a man must be very phlegmatic, or very unhappy, who did not—at least for the moment—become cheerful and communicative thereby. A harmless cheerful laughter is certainly the most effectual means of reconciling one to life and mankind. This was it which Miss Greta well understood. In profound reliance on the wise ordinations of God, she was thoroughly persuaded that the best aim of men is to amuse themselves as much as possible in this world, that is, so far as is in accordance with the ten commandments and social propriety.

Rich and independent, she yet continued unmarried, because, amid the many who had offered themselves, she had found none who could promise her a higher happiness, or a more agreeable life than that which, as a free and independent lady, she now enjoyed. She lived much in the great world, not because she really preferred it, but because her lively, critical humour here found rich material; and this very humorous disposition it was which made her much sought after, while the unimpeachable excellence of her character and her sound sense won for her universal love and respect. A sworn foe of every exaltation, she lent her most zealous endeavours to reduce all chords that she found too tightly stretched to a lower tone; and it is not to be denied that here she might easily fall sometimes into a judgment too severe, because she had not yet had occasion to form a yet closer acquaintance with her own warm and excellent heart. She was lady-like, but not haughty, and had a natural respect for every independent person, provided he did not make too familiar approaches to "Her Ladyship." She cherished a hearty contempt for all insignificance, and still more for stupidity. Insolent assurance she abominated to perfect hatred, and chastised it where she could. As she was herself secure and quiet in her wishes and sentiments, she had very little desire to witness the intrigues, strivings, pretensions, and complaints of others; though she probably was not quite indifferent to the influence which she exercised on all with whom she came in contact. She was not always mild, not always just; but she operated, as we have said, inexpressibly beneficially on the minds of those around her; and wherever she appeared, there involuntarily was infused a fresher tone, more cheerfulness in the outward, and a truer vivacity in the inner life of society. I have often thought that if one could but multiply Miss Greta a hundred thousand times, the world certainly would need only the half of its hospitals, its lunatic asylums, and its medicinal springs.

The house of the Countess H. was splendid and agreeable. Miss Greta had always been much with her cousin, without particularly liking her, but *she* pleased the Countess extremely, nor could she herself remain perfectly insensible to the fascinations of the other. Yet Miss Greta did not feel herself quite so much at home now in her house as formerly. With

Edla she did not get on at all well. They displayed towards each other the most punctilious politeness, and there it ended. Edla withdrew herself almost entirely out of the social circle of the Countess. As to Nina, she was for Miss Greta, according to her own expression, "too little a creature of this world." She thought her beautiful, but disapproved of the homage with which the Countess treated her, thereby seeming to undervalue older friends. This little pique was the cause of her not doing Nina full justice, and causing her to find nothing to admire in her beyond her beauty.

Another person in this family was to Miss Greta a regular bore. This was the young lady whom the Countess had taken under her protection, and who was styled by Miss Greta—"the silent Clara," but, however, as her manner justified the cognomen, she might with still greater propriety have been termed "the industrious Clara." Eternally occupied with sewing, or with an eminently beautiful piece of embroidery, she appeared to have no other interest in the world than the finishing of it. At the Countess's splendid entertainments she sat still and indifferent, and appeared, deprived of her sewing apparatus, to be suffering the most dreadful *ennui*. She noticed nobody, and never inquired whether any one noticed her, so that she could but sew. When others contended, and most vehemently took one or other side of a question, she sat still and sewed. When all was life and motion with social enjoyment and conversation, Clara still sate silent and sewed. When others yawned or grumbled, Clara sate still and sewed. Some one spoke to her; she looked up, answered politely, but as briefly as possible, looked down again, and—sewed. This tried Miss Greta's patience beyond all expression. Add to this, Clara had adopted a catalogue of certain words, which appeared to comprehend her whole stock of language, and which she, when required, and as Miss Greta declared, when not required, made use of. They were such as these—"that may be"—"what signifies it"—"don't trouble yourself"—"pray be seated"—"that does no harm"—"pray leave off"—and the like. Especially often was heard a certain indifferent "Oh, indeed!" which threw Miss Greta into actual desperation. She herself possessed, in the best sense of the word, the most beautiful quiet of the soul; and, amid the widely prevailing unsettled-

ness of mind, valued herself a little upon it; but this quiet, this indifference, was a caricature of hers; it was at once irritating and incomprehensible to her. But what vexed her most of all was, that Clara, spite of her laconisms and her sewing apparatus, had a sort of fascination for her, which she was not able to resist. This partly lay in the physical enigma, which excited her curiosity—how a person with reason, understanding, and all her senses, with flesh and bone, could be touched by nothing in the world which interested everybody else, and could be made responsive to no impression. Partly, however, this lay in Clara's disposition—something which irresistibly reminded Miss Greta of Baron H.'s expression—"holy;" something so simple, so true, so—Miss Greta knew not herself what: but it continued irresistible for her, and drove her attention constantly again to an object, for which she at the same time maintained a steady secret dislike.

Clara was not handsome, but one could by no means call her plain. Her somewhat dark complexion made her at the first glance appear so; but when one observed her more closely, one then saw that her skin was fine, clear, and transparent. If she ever felt herself touched with a lively feeling, a phenomenon which Miss Greta had not yet witnessed, her pale countenance was flushed with a crimson glow, which gave it a strange charm, and the light-brown eyes raised themselves slowly under the finely cut eyelids, and beamed with radiant gentleness and kindness.

One fine day Miss Greta resolved, for once, to try a little more clearly what was the real state of Clara's intellectual faculties. She gave herself much trouble to make herself appear amusing and amiable to her, and gave free scope to all her wit and her good humour. Clara listened to her droll remarks with a quiet smile, and—sewed; she answered her questions politely, but briefly, and—sewed; by degrees she seemed to listen only by halves, and answered quite at random; finally, came an ill-timed "Oh! indeed!" and Miss Greta's patience snapped. She was seriously angry; stood hastily up, and vowed that she would never again make the attempt to enliven so cold and uncourteous a person.

From this moment Miss Greta and Clara stood to a certain degree in a hostile attitude, in which the former did not always show herself particularly gentle. There were many

things which Miss Greta found requisite, which Clara on the contrary considered as totally unnecessary. As if to provoke Clara, Miss Greta now frequently occasioned certain disquiets and manifold interruptions, on which occasions Clara took refuge in her accustomed "Pray be quiet." Let this be expressed as mildly as possible, it nevertheless always vexed Miss Greta uncommonly, and she replied on one occasion with considerable warmth—"Dear Clara, I am really too old to be made quiet in this manner; you would do much better to edify yourself with your wise exhortations." Such bickerings often recurred; yet Miss Greta's ill-humour operated less depressingly on Clara than a single cold look of the Countess's. I will not withhold from my dear reader the following profound remarks on this.

In many a contention lies the seeds of a warm friendship, or many a sociable agreement is properly only an evidence that we have nothing to say to one another. Indifference will neither quarrel nor kiss.

The silent Clara had three wild brothers: one was a lawyer, the second a naval lieutenant, the third a lieutenant in the army. The wild brothers loved the silent Clara from their hearts, and desired nothing so much as to see her married. They looked about on all sides for a good husband for her—above all things for a *rich* husband, who might take the poor brothers-in-law under his fostering care. They perpetually besieged her with inquiries whether no lover had yet announced himself; whether she dressed well; whether she had put herself forward properly. With the most well-meant views they tormented her continually.

The Countess was not the less anxious than the three brothers to make a good match for Clara. She regarded it as a matter of conscience, and, moreover, would gladly have the threads of a love-story in hand. Clara answered the brothers kindly and evasively, and arranged her toilette as little as possible after the prescriptions of the Countess. Miss Greta wished all possible earthly success to the exertions of the Countess and the brothers; she, in fact, had taken up a little hatred against the incomprehensible Clara, and longed for the day in which this insensible wall should no longer spoil the prospect of the house.

The lovers indeed appeared, and that quickly, and to their

hearts' content. Baron H. next showed his attentions, which every one noticed and interpreted, except Clara herself.

Baron H., during the time that we lost sight of him, accomplished himself in a very unexpected and peculiar manner. We have already said that he was not yet in possession of a wife. Nevertheless he had—people knew not how—found a son, a charming, pretty boy, whom he named Filius. Leo was his baptismal name. From whom he derived his surname, who he was, whence he came, nobody knew, and it was impossible to obtain from Baron H. the slightest explanation. He only said that Filius was a foundling, and cut short all further conversation about him. This very mystery, in the mean time, and certain half suppositions which were in circulation on the subject, awoke in Miss Greta a feeling of displeasure, not only against the Baron himself, but also against this little somewhat wilful Filius, whose fine countenance and charming complexion did not, in Miss Greta's opinion, authorise him to accompany the Baron everywhere, and to receive an education such as the Baron could only desire for his own son. Baron H. had an affection for the boy which bordered on weakness, and did not allow himself to be in the least disturbed by the queries and remarks of Miss Greta; he answered her either not at all, or with the best humour in the world. Miss Greta by this felt herself wounded both in her feelings and her curiosity. Hence she regarded the little Filius with ungracious eyes, from which cause it happened that he had but little respect for her. On the contrary, he attached himself gladly to Nina, and obeyed her slightest hint. He was called Nina's little worshipper, and presented an example of the power which beauty exerts on the mind of a child.

One evening there was at the President's a great party. The Countess attracted all eyes, yes! even more than the lovely Nina. Clad in crimson velvet, with a gold embroidered turban on her proud head, she seated herself at her harp, and drew thence the most enchanting tones, while with great artistical skill she sang a bravura of Meyerbeer's. A wide circle of admirers stood round her: the President was amongst these, and was almost beside himself with rapture.

Baron H. approached Clara, who, in a dark brown silk

dress, with a double tulle pelerine on her graceful shoulders, formed as it were the shadow in this glittering assembly. The Baron seated himself comfortably in an easy chair by her. "A charming talent," said he, with cool commendation of the Countess's song.

Clara answered with as cool a "yes."

"You probably sing and play too?" asked the Baron with more interest.

"No," replied Clara quietly.

"Then I am convinced that you draw admirably."

"No, I have not the least talent," answered Clara in the selfsame tone.

"So! well, well, and why should you? The whole world has talents. All ladies sing, play, and draw just a little, as they say; and really they consume much precious time with these things, which might be much better employed. How much proper were it if they qualified themselves for good housewives—learned to cook nicely. I am persuaded you are very clever in these matters?"

"No, I do not understand these either."

"Well, that can be learned, that can be learned," said the Baron, consolingly. "One has a clever cook, and then—but you certainly understand how to set out a good dinner?"

"No!" answered Clara, "I can only eat it."

"Well said, Clara!" thought some one not far off; and a hearty laugh, which could no longer be repressed, betrayed Miss Greta as a listener to this discourse. Baron H. reddened, and cast a severe glance at Miss Greta, which she, however, confident of speedy forgiveness, wholly disregarded; for, spite of all dissonance, there prevailed between Baron H. and Miss Greta an indestructible sympathy, which drew them irresistibly together. Both had need of entertainment, and both found this need never better satisfied than in each other's society.

But Clara's "No!" did not deter the Baron; on the contrary, he appeared to take a continually growing interest in the silent being, and sought to make her acquainted with the talents of the little Filius. The boy had no inconsiderable talent for drawing, in which he chiefly exercised himself with coal or chalk, and for which Miss Greta would most willingly have rapped his knuckles; but Baron H. prophesied

a new Michael Angelo. It was not to be denied that he had an extraordinary degree of talent. After the true manner of artists he saw everywhere only means and appliances for his art. Thence arose the disagreeable circumstance, that one often encountered eyes and noses where one least expected to find them. In vain Miss Greta purchased a whole volume of drawing-paper, and spread out the sheets in Filius's way. Filius aspired to the great even in space, and preferred infinitely sketching on floors and walls. Clara did all in her power to guard against the injurious consequences both to Filius and the walls, and the Baron who dreaded nothing so much as that of laying the imagination of the young artist under obstructive bonds, was beyond words thankful to her for it. He was ever attentive to her, and made his court in the tenderest manner, while he presented to her the most beautiful flowers, which she could not refuse. The Countess already looked victorious and confident; the three wild brothers congratulated themselves on the brother-in-law so soon to be; and Miss Greta said, "let what may happen, happen quickly!" Then at once stepped forth a new wooer, a young merchant, who had earlier known and loved Clara in her father's house; but had not asked her hand, because he was then poor and dependent. Now by skill and diligence he had so far advanced himself, that he had purchased his house and garden, and wished to ask his long and truly-loved one to share with him his new fortune. We call him Mr. Frederiks. He procured an introduction to the house of the President. His manner was a little awkward, but his heart was brave, and a certain fresh genial-spiritedness spoke out of his eyes. Baron H. regarded him somewhat, "*de haut en bas.*" Mr. Frederiks, on the contrary, gazed right honest-heartedly on the Baron. Both surrounded Clara continually, but paid their attentions in very different ways. Baron H. seated himself by her, praised her work, her diligence, let his white hand with a diamond ring and the gold snuff-box manœuvre before her eyes, and from time to time offered, with much devotion, a pinch. He spoke excellently and with much vivacity of the happiness of a quiet friendly wedlock; made humorous remarks on life and man, in the course of which he did not omit to throw in many compliments to his listener, and twinkled knowingly his "very pretty eyes,"

as Miss Greta called them. Mr. Frederiks, on the contrary, fixed on Clara a whole battery of glances, was constantly on foot, and had a certain way of stamping and tripping round, which to the still maiden was inconceivably annoying. He talked much of his arrangements; and jumbled all—equipage, brilliant houses, society, in short, all his plans, into the most motley medley. He wished his future wife to make the Countess her model. In the mean time neither of the lovers appeared to make an impression on Clara's heart. She continued completely herself, and treated one exactly like the other. She took no pinch out of the Baron's box, noticed not his ring, made no reply to his liveliest conversations—but sewed. She answered not Mr. Frederiks' eye-language, looked not up at the description of his new chandelier, and if a sigh escaped, it was the consequence of his everlasting bustling about. She avowed no impatience on this head; she avowed, in fact, nothing at all, but looked only on her work—and sewed. Miss Greta contemplated her with a secret bitterness, and wished her in Vanina's cabinet of wax-work.

“I begin actually to be staggered in my faith in my Bible,” said Miss Greta; “it says there, that there is nothing new under the sun; and yet I am persuaded that the sun has never shone upon such a specimen of humanity as Clara.”

The three wild brothers stormed from north and south upon the still sister. She should determine; she should hasten to make both herself and her brothers happy.

The lawyer took part with the Baron, whose rank and fine manners impressed him greatly. The naval lieutenant and the land lieutenant contended for Mr. Frederiks, “a rich man, a handsome man, and fundamentally so honourable a fellow!”

They now learned with astonishment and horror that are not to be described, that the still sister would not marry at all, and had resolved to refuse both the lovers, if they did not, as she hoped, withdraw themselves from the coldness of her conduct. Clara had now heavy storms to bear. The lawyer, who looked upon himself as the head of the family, read the sister long lectures on her duties; he painted the future in the most flaming colours, with pitch-black or glowing rose, according as he associated them with marrying or not marry-

ing. The lieutenants were furiously angry, swore if Clara became an old maid, they would never trouble themselves about her, and left her in towering wrath. After such scenes Clara commonly appeared with tears in her mild eyes; and had yet much harder conflicts to sustain. The Countess summoned her in the morning to her presence; made long harangues to her which, although extremely fluent and emphatic, appeared not to possess the smallest rhetorical charm for Clara. The Countess found much in her to blame. She made her observant of the obligations under which she lay to her benefactress, and preached morals out of Lehnberg and Bossuet. She dilated amply on all which under the most favourable circumstances she proposed to do for Clara. With especial emphasis she commanded her to assume a more decided behaviour to one or the other of her admirers, so that he might take courage to declare himself; she should not, as hitherto, continue polite and indifferent to both, which resembled the conduct of a coquette, and might end in nothing. In short, she ran through a whole register of teachings and exhortations.

When Clara assured her that she had not the slightest intention of giving hope to either of the lovers, but rather wished with her whole heart that they would leave her in peace, and wholly forget her, the Countess declared this to be a silly and senseless subterfuge. As Clara now more distinctly stated that she had no intention of marrying at all, the Countess became highly excited. She talked of ingratitude, and made Clara feel that she lived only through her beneficence. This struck deep and painfully into Clara's soul; and the causes which rendered her resolution so inflexible, must indeed have been very weighty, as they overcame the bitterness with which she was assailed. She remained steadfast, remained finally silent, and returned to her indifference and her sewing. The Countess, however, thought it good to interrupt this latter activity as much as possible, and began to employ the silent Clara about the house in a multitude of ways. Clara betrayed no trace of ill-humour, performed all cheerfully and with alacrity, but in consequence sate up at night and sewed. In the mean time, her exterior evinced a dejection which, to a certain degree, operated refreshingly on Miss Greta, since she detected at least a trace of feeling,

where she had imagined only obtuseness, and she very willingly saw her in trouble because of the trouble which she had caused her.

But ever blacker clouds gathered themselves round poor Clara, and menaced her earthly welfare. The Countess considered her conduct so incomprehensible, that she began to entertain mistrust, and fell on the idea that Clara must have secret, perhaps unworthy, motives for it. She was always prone to a certain system of espionage, the most unhappy of all systems which people can employ in their house; and this she would now avail herself of in Clara's case. She called Miss Greta even to a co-operation, but she answered abruptly, "She did not meddle with such matters."

The Countess now charged her maid to watch and to spy out Clara's proceedings, and soon received cause for heavy suspicions. Once or twice in the week Clara was in the habit of going out wholly alone, without saying anything, and then returning as quietly and as little observed as possible. People also began to take notice that the little gifts which she now and then received from her patroness were never worn by her. They reminded her of her necklaces, of her earrings—but Clara continued unadorned. She answered finally, with tears in eyes, that she was no longer in possession of them, but she refused to give further information on the subject. Upon these discoveries the Countess built the most strange suspicions; communicated them to Miss Greta, and began to lay a heavy hand on Clara.

We have already intimated that the Countess, with her great æsthetic accomplishment, was yet destitute of the peculiar beauty of the heart—goodness; and we must add, that she could be hard and morally cruel towards those who fell under her displeasure, and to whom she in her own mind was not well affected. The necessity for her to be perpetually on the scene, to play perpetually a part, and everywhere to command, made her even to those who most sincerely admired her fine talents somewhat tyrannical, but far more so to those who did not know how to please her or to secure her favour. Clara speedily felt the whole weight of a disposition which, under the most polished forms, yet knew how mercilessly to oppress. It was nothing that she became the lady's-maid as well as housekeeper to the Countess; that

she must prepare and alter one head-dress after another; that she must run from the dressing-room to the kitchen, from the kitchen to the dressing-room, in order to execute a thousand commands—this was really nothing! But that she never received a friendly look; that she was subjected to sharp words and angry mistrust,—this was hard, this cost her heart heavy conflicts. But Clara bore all with unshakable patience, and availed herself of the first free moment to return with renewed zeal to her needle. Miss Greta knew, in fact, no longer whether she should, on account of this endurance, more admire or detest her. With deep displeasure she heard of her secret promenades, and feared that the cause of them might be less praiseworthy than her other and daily behaviour.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INQUIRY.

That father and mother from death are freed,
Might I now with sore anguish upbraid them;
But God, our sole helper in time of need,
He best knows our hearts, and will aid them.

Swedish Folks' Song.

It was a fresh autumn morning; one of those mornings whose clear inspiring air fills our hearts with new pleasures and new hopes, and emboldens us to enterprise. This influence was felt by both of Clara's worshippers: they both arose with the very same thought, and issued forth with the same purpose. Slowly and dignifiedly as becomes the aristocrat, and with anxious care not to heat himself, strode forward the Baron H., one hand on his back, and the other on the golden knob of his cane. Quick and business-like as industry's self, and burdened with no excessive corpulence, hastened Mr. Frederiks towards the same goal, but by another and shorter way, so that he reached the dwelling of his beloved before the Baron.

The Countess was in her usual reception-room, amid a multitude of newly-arrived books. By the window sate the silent Clara—and sewed. Thither, after the first salutations, Mr. Frederiks steered, and laid before her short and bluntly his wish to make her his wife. With faltering voice, but decidedly and respectfully, she declined his offer, and the young

man was already on the way to withdraw himself, greatly cast down, when the Countess arose and desired him not to be in too great a hurry, or at once to regard this affair as desperate. Clara would certainly bethink herself, would reconsider the matter, she said, and invited him to dinner on the following day. After a brief indecision, and a vain endeavour to read Clara's downcast eyes, Mr. Frederiks accepted the invitation and withdrew. The Countess threw a tolerably fierce look at Clara, and returned to her books. Now appeared Baron H., and the same scene was repeated, as well as Clara's negative answer; except with this difference, that Clara evinced a degree of sympathy, and Baron H. did not look particularly cast down; on the contrary, as the Countess begged him to have patience with a young maiden who did not know what she would have, and would certainly soon come to reason, he answered kindly, that he would certainly exert himself to the utmost not to take Clara at her word till she said, "Yes." The Countess invited him thereupon to dinner a day later than Mr. Frederiks, hoping by that time to wring from the foolish Clara a decision.

To Clara's great relief, the Countess was the rest of the day from home. It was not till evening that she returned from a dinner at the castle; Miss Greta entered at the same moment to spend the evening with her, and the command was immediately sent to poor Clara to present herself in the Countess's bedroom. Clara felt at this message an extraordinary anxiety, and her knees trembled as she passed through the ante-room of the Countess. During the long harangues which the Countess made her, and at which for the most part she played a silent part, she was in the habit of pushing to and fro a little gold ring which she wore on her finger. Miss Greta had frequently noticed this uniform manœuvre with silent vexation, and was curious to see whether in this decisive moment it would be repeated. She seated herself comfortably on the sofa, took up the "Memoirs of the Duchess of Abrantes," prepared to fix all her attention on Clara, on the words and movements of this "wooden doll." Miss Greta had found Clara so indescribably tedious and disagreeable, that she had called her "a heavy creature with a hateful mystery-mongery;" so that it is difficult to conceive what

great interest she could take in the examination now at hand. She did not account for it to herself; but it is certain that this interest had risen to the highest pitch, and she awaited Clara's entrance with impatience. The Countess sate at her toilette, and was still in full court dress as she had come from the royal table. We cannot resist setting down a few of the wilful remarks which Miss Greta secretly made upon her cousin, while she examined the "History of the Duchess of Abrantes" with sufficient exactness.

"Well, do but see how Natalie throws forward her chest! She sets the right foot forward—plants the left elbow carelessly on the table—the attitude is ready! She retains the pearls yet, in order—she turns her head half towards the door—she erects herself proudly—she thinks herself a Semiramis; and all thoroughly to confound and dazzle the poor Clara, who, like Esther before Ahasuerus, appears and swoons away. Natalie will dash her absolutely down. It will be a precious scene!"

The bearing and mien of the Countess were, in fact, in the highest degree imposing; but perhaps Clara felt at this moment the penetrating glance which Miss Greta fixed on her still more deeply than the proud bearing of her benefactress. In the mean time she fell into no swoon; and whatever might be her feelings, her external appearance betrayed nothing of them. She was somewhat pale, but her manner was quiet. The muslin handkerchief with the broad hem lay as smoothly as usual on the shoulders, and was folded into regular plaits brought forward to the front. The everlasting "fraise" was stiff and white as ever. Miss Greta sighed.

The Countess desired Clara to take a chair, and commenced her speech. She spoke first of the two very handsome offers which had been made her; explained the advantages of both; detailed her conceptions of Clara's position, and of the duties which she herself had to perform towards her; she should consider herself happy to be able to contribute her part towards so honourable a union as either of these; and ended by commanding Clara to make a declaration of her choice.

She spoke beautifully, and with unusual energy; but for all her excellent and logical sentences, Clara had but the old

answer—"She was sincerely obliged to both the gentlemen for their proposals, but could by no means fulfil their wishes. She would remain unmarried—she could never marry."

Miss Greta took her *lorgnette* to look a little closer at Clara on these declarations. She considered the idea of a poor maiden obstinately rejecting two wealthy lovers as "very peculiar."

On the other hand, the Countess turned red with anger, and demanded severely, "May I ask then what your plans for the future are?"

"That I cannot yet say," replied Clara with a sigh, "but I hope soon to be able to do so."

"Miss Clara acts very independently!—and seems to hold me, my counsel, and approval, as nothing at all. Clara, I must remind you, that your father gave you into my hands, into my protection."

"I have never forgotten it," said Clara with a faltering voice.

"I considered myself therefore justified," continued the Countess, "in controlling your actions."

"I acknowledge it!" cried Clara with emotion. "I am thankful for all the kindness which the lady Countess has shown me. I will be attentive and obedient—but ah! if no more might be said of my marrying!"

"She is quite interesting," thought Miss Greta, letting the "Memoirs of the Duchess of Abrantes" fall from her hand.

"Clara!" said the Countess, "your behaviour is too strange not to give ground for suspicions. You are a poor girl; you have not the slightest prospect for the future!"

"God gives the birds their food—he will not forget me!"

Miss Greta felt for her handkerchief, and fixed her eyes on the floor, without however lifting up the Duchess.

"That is really very fine!" said the Countess ironically; "but these God-fearing thoughts are utterly unproductive, and at last people betake themselves to their friends and relatives, on whom they fall as a burden. But don't trouble yourself on that account; I shall always be glad to see the daughter of an old friend under my roof. I would not be so pressing for your marriage, since you are so opposed to it, if I did not fear that other, and perhaps less pure causes lie at the bottom of this irrational resolve. I must tell you plainly,

Clara, that you are observed, and your conduct has given occasion to the most strange suspicions."

Miss Greta expected to hear Clara say, "that may be!" but Clara did not say so. She turned red and pale; stood up, sat down again, and finally remained standing.

With increased coldness and severity the Countess proceeded: "Since you have been in my house, you have received various articles of value as presents. These have vanished; whither? no one knows. You go out frequently in the dusk. Clara, I demand an explanation of this!"

Clara stood speechless and pale.

"Your father," said the Countess further, "confided you to my protection and my oversight; in his name I demand an account of this!"

"I cannot now give it," answered Clara with an anxious voice, but with more self-possession than before.

"Not now?" demanded the Countess sharply; "when then?"

"I don't know," replied Clara embarrassed, and as if she did not know what she was saying, "I believe—I don't know——"

"You *must* know it, you *shall* answer—when?"

Clara cast an expressive glance towards heaven, as if she would say—"THERE!"

"These are subterfuges, Clara! I will hear nothing of them," cried the Countess sternly. "I declare to you then that my duty towards you and towards your late father compels me to abridge a liberty which you abuse. From this moment you remain in your room, till you either accept one of these honourable offers, or till no other doubt rests on your unbecoming proceedings."

Miss Greta called once more her *lorgnette* to her aid, to observe Clara more closely. She stood still, with her arms not crossed, but laid one upon the other. She was extremely pale; tears glistened in her eyes, although the expression of her countenance was perfectly composed, perfectly innocent. That word "holy" again occurred to Miss Greta. She felt that her mediation was here needed, and with a seriousness which was not wholly destitute of warmth, she said to the Countess:

"Dear Natalie, that is neither kind nor just. We have no

proof that Clara's walks offend against propriety, but before we know this positively, we have no right to shut her up. To criminate any one who may be guiltless, and to punish him without proof of his crime, is in my eyes an injustice which I cannot endure, and which must not be committed."

People will perhaps be surprised at the dictatorial tone which Miss Greta assumed in an affair in which she was not properly concerned. But Miss Greta had been long accustomed, as well in her own family as in the wide circle of her acquaintance, to see her claims submitted to like the laws of Solon or Moses in antiquity, and this appeared to her quite in order.

In the same decided tone Miss Greta continued: "If Clara, indeed, has given away, or, according to her pleasure, disposed of the gifts which she has received, I see nothing in that which deserves a punishment or banishment from the country. The only thing, as it seems to me, that we can demand from Clara is, that she voluntarily relinquishes her walks out, at least till she herself assigns a satisfactory reason for them. Will you do that, Clara?"

After a little consideration, Clara answered "Yes!"

"Well, then," continued Miss Greta, "for this time I hope Clara is excused from imprisonment. We have had, I think, plenty of cholera and quarantine regulations, and may well be weary of the thing. As regards the proposals of marriage, I really cannot deny that Clara has acted like a silly girl; but at the same time, in heaven's name, people must not be whipped into matrimony. One can be very happy without it—I think with Paul. The best and surest way is, that Clara does nothing in a hurry, but takes a fitting time for consideration. Dearest Natalie, allow Clara a deliberative time of three months. The worthy gentlemen can very well wait a little for a good wife, and Baron H. looks indeed to me as if he could serve for Clara like Jacob for Rachel. In short, we conclude the contract of peace for three months. Clara gives up her promenades, and, on the other hand, is spared all matrimonial proposals for the space of three months. Will the parties sign?"

Clara looked up to her protectress with an indescribable expression. Miss Greta felt a certain something about her heart which she had not known before. The Countess, how-

ever, answered with a mixture of displeasure and concession.

"You are much too good to Clara. She does not at all deserve it. In the mean time I will, at your recommendation, allow this time for reflection. I know not, however, whether the gentlemen will find that it will repay them for the trouble to wait so long."

"I will manage that," responded Miss Greta.

Visitors were now announced. The Countess arose majestically, and went forth without a glance at Clara; but Miss Greta stepped up to her, took her hand, and said seriously and kindly:

"My best Clara! between ourselves, you have acted somewhat foolishly and imprudently; and if, as I suspect, a third bridegroom is concealed behind the promenades, I advise you sincerely to bring him as quickly as possible to the light, and let the other gentlemen retire. Fair play, dear Clara, and a little sound sense, bring us furthest before God and man."

With this she pressed Clara's hand, and left her. Clara covered her eyes with both hands—"Mother! mother! what dost thou cost me!" sighed she in speechless agony.

From this time forward Miss Greta conceived a far higher interest in Clara. This had a threefold ground. In the first place, Miss Greta found her singular; then she wished to fathom the secret; and lastly, Clara was become her protégée. She endeavoured now with all zeal to become better acquainted with her, in order to win her confidence, and to be able to help her. But ah! the interesting Clara, since that remarkable evening, had totally vanished; the still and stupid one had again taken her place—and sewed! Or she busied herself with the concerns of the house, or with the thousand articles of the Countess's toilette, and all with an attention and silence that might drive one to distraction. The expression of countenance testified to Miss Greta deep gratitude, but speech and answer continued laconic as before.

This then at length wounded Miss Greta, both in her feelings and in her pride—for we must confess that she was a little proud—that so insignificant a person as Clara should so little value the friendship of a lady of Miss Greta's spirit and character,—a friendship which she so rarely offered to any one,—this was hardly to be borne. And had not Miss

Greta spoken with the Countess? Quieted the three wild brothers, and bargained for the three months of rest? Had she not persuaded the lovers also to three months' patience? Had she not rescued Clara out of imprisonment and persecution? It made Miss Greta actually angry, for all those exertions to receive so little acknowledgment.

She determined now in her pride to withdraw herself entirely from Clara, and never to trouble herself about her again. But oh, the sorrow! at this very time Miss Greta was less able than ever to withdraw her thoughts from Clara; to avoid admiring, yes, actually envying her! For her keen glance could not help discerning that Clara, spite of her stillness and reserve, had yet within her a rich and full life. Her looks betrayed it. Miss Greta was the more annoyed at this inward fulness of life in a person of so monotonous an exterior and so joyless an existence; while she herself, endowed with all that fortune, the world, and the interests of life, could confer, had often, and especially of late, felt an inward emptiness which she did not know how to fill. And what then could it be which so inwardly satisfied the poor and helpless Clara? Which made her so patient under the orders and counter-orders of the Countess? Which allowed her to forget that she was deprived of all the joys of youth, and must contemplate a walk to church on a Sunday as her sole relaxation? What was it which made her so gentle and obliging to others, while she herself led a life so full of self-denial? Doubts and questions of this sort frequently presented themselves to the mind of Miss Greta. "What is properly joy?" she asked herself, "what is pleasure? After what shall we strive, in order to be happy, and live pleasantly? Natalie possesses beauty, talents, a fulness of affluence, and has countless admirers. This poor forsaken maiden has none of all these. I myself can enjoy as much of the good things of this world as I will—for this, I have health, good spirits, a willing body, understanding, and all the senses and ability to laugh and joke at command,—and at the same time, I can very well believe that this still, dependent creature, would not exchange with me. And I cannot blame her for it; for with all I possess in the world, I find it by no means too amusing. But she, who has actually nothing—what does she think of? What satisfies her?" Clara was Miss Greta's torment.

But it is time that we at length ceased entirely forgetting ourselves in the company of Miss Greta ; we will now, therefore, look after the President a little.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRESIDENT.

How d'ye do? How d'ye do?

The Acquaintance.

AND in fact, it is time that we visit the new-married man, and ask him how he does.

“Excellently!” would his Excellency have answered ; but Truth whispers us behind his back, “Not particularly so.”

It stood indeed as follows. The President was in love with his wife, but found himself to such a degree disturbed in his old habits, in his comfort, in the mode of life which he had hitherto led, that it operated obviously both on his health and temper. His beautiful Countess was a charming hostess, an amiable lady of the house ; but an attentive managing wife she was not. He must wait on, care for, ask, do, amuse, fondle, and follow. The poor President got quite out of breath. He was, however, in love ; and when she called him, “My sweet one ! my angel !” and stroked his chin with her white hand, he was enraptured and even happy. Ah, Cupido ! Cupido !

But this amorousness, the secret discontent, and a certain feeling that he had acted foolishly, all this made the President not only out of humour, and dissatisfied with himself, but awoke in him also a sort of fear before Edla. He was ashamed of his feelings before the clear-sighted daughter ; he began to avoid her glance and her society, and this the more anxiously as he felt the injustice he did to her, who least deserved it, by this coldness and reserve. Edla soon observed that he sought to avoid her ; yet keenly as it pained her, she conformed herself in this respect immediately to the will of her father. She also had much to conceal from him ; she too felt herself unhappy through the change in the family, and knew not how to say a cheerful word to her father.

The Countess occupied herself chiefly and almost exclusively with Nina. As a fine connoisseur of art, she knew how to estimate Nina's perfect and entrancing beauty. She

was thoroughly absorbed by it, and the sight of her was as necessary to her as to an artist that of his ideal. She exerted all that was captivating in her own mind and manner to win Nina to herself. She gave her instruction on the harp, in singing, in Italian, and caressed her without intermission. The lovely Nina was idolised by her, while the ungifted Clara only received from her cold looks and commands. But she was not contented with her own fascination herself, she was ambitious to direct the attention of all the world to Nina's beauty. This was an easy task. Whom do not beauty and sweetness charm? Who can behold the pure features of beauty without having a consciousness of God? A circle of admirers gathered around Nina, but who actually only admired her? There was something more than earthly in Nina, which excited to worship rather than to love. The artists soon gathered about, with chisel and pencil, partly in obedience to the Countess, partly to their own artistic sense. Södermark must paint her portrait in oil, Waj in miniature; Mamselle Röhl must draw her in chalk, Fogelberg execute her bust in marble, and model her hand; neither were modellers in wax and cutters of profiles wanting to copy the inimitable head and the muse-like features.

It was not without pleasure that Nina saw herself made an object of so much tenderness, so much homage; yet she did not step forth from the cloud which enveloped her as with a magic glory. She continued sweet and amiable, though in a higher sphere of life, through which she floated as an ideal existence, as a vision out of a better world, but never stood there as an ordinary individual mortal. Her life resembled the beautiful picture of the triumph of Galatea.

In her chariot, borne by the waves, and drawn by dolphins, the young goddess lay in luxurious ease. Naiads and Tritons dance round her, laughing and sporting in the tumbling billows; the God of Love scatters the way with flowers, and Zephyr kisses and fans her cheeks with his soft breath. She lets them dance, and scatter flowers, lets the winds play with her locks, and the floods bear her on, while she carelessly reclines, dreams, and smiles. But this sweet repose, this manner, native as it were, to the higher existences, of receiving homage, and looking down from the clouds with a tranquil, mild indifference—this was Nina's especial and

most peculiar charm. But perhaps still more captivating was she, when a quiet sadness carried her wholly away from the splendour which surrounded her, and led her feelings into a world of twilight where no thought was able to follow her. There lay then a momentary paleness on her features, as if death, rushing hastily past, but gently fanned her with his wing. Yet the exciting, variable life of her present home operated less prejudicially on her health than might have been feared, and most frequently a delicate rose bloomed on her cheek.

Count Ludwig was generally near her, but less in the character of a lover than as a quiet spectator, keeping his property in his eye.

Miss Greta was heartily weary of deifying of Nina; of the portraits, busts, and the lessons on the harp. She often made herself merry over them in her lively, intellectual manner; but often, too, gave free scope to her wrath against these absurd goings on, as well as against Clara's inaccessibility, and lightened her heart with Baron H., who now, as she declared, was the only man with whom she could speak a sensible word. Filius through this found himself in better case with her than formerly.

Edla contemplated with growing uneasiness the triumph of her favourite. She had wished to introduce by degrees the tender bloom which she had so long shielded and guarded in the shades of peace, to life, to activity, and to another atmosphere; and now she saw her suddenly exposed to the scorching beams of the mid-day sun. At first, she tried expostulations with her father against it; but he, opposed to the will of his wife, was much too weak, and desired expressly that Nina should entirely follow the wishes of the Countess. In order that Edla might not lose the child of her cares and of her heart completely out of her sight, there now remained nothing for her but to accompany her wherever she went. This was as little agreeable to the Countess as it was painful and wearisome to Edla. She exchanged her beloved quiet solitude, for a society in which she felt herself out of place, and assumed near Nina the involuntary part of a gloomy Argus. The Countess soon made Edla feel how superfluous was her presence, and did what she could by petty humiliations and slights to drive her from her brilliant

saloon. Edla was of too lofty a character, and had made her soul too free, to suffer herself to be wounded by pin-pricks; but for Nina also was her presence useless, and by her also, as it seemed, was she overlooked. This pained her deeply. Besides, the stepmother invaded most disturbingly Edla's whole life. By imperceptible but skilful manœuvres, all power in the house, all interest in the management, was withdrawn from her. The old domestics were dismissed, the new ones would only obey the commands of the Countess; and thus Edla saw daily more and more how unnecessary she was in her father's house. She withdrew in silence to her solitary room, and appeared only at the dinner-table, but always kind and quiet. My sweet female reader! thou who wilt probably understand how gnawing such a domestic position must be, how easily it can embitter heart and mind—oh, say, must it not have been a beautiful, a noble doctrine which enabled Edla to conduct herself with so much repose, gentleness, and good sense? In her solitude she found freer, better society than in the circle she abandoned; and she would have been truly contented and happy in it, had she not missed so painfully her beloved pupil, her former daily companion. As she saw that this dissipated life agreed with Nina's health, she was careful to conceal her feelings. When she once asked her beautiful sister whether the present course gave her pleasure, she replied, with her accustomed love of truth,—“Yes; it is so pleasant to please and to be beloved.”

Edla laid up this word in her bosom; it gave her pain. “Do I not love her too?” thought she; “though I do not flatter her, nor misguide her. I who would lay down my life for her!” She regarded herself now as misunderstood also by Nina; she became even stiller and more retiring. Nina considered Edla cold and unsympathising. There lay a cloud between the two sisters. Each felt a secret tear well from her soul on this account. Why do we not let them flow? Why may they not betray what the tongue hesitates to acknowledge? What is it which so often, at least for a time, thrusts itself between the best friends, like the sorcery of bad spirits? Each sees it, but it is not to be overcome; an insurmountable, invisible obstacle stands in the way; we

suffer, we avoid one another, we doubt whether it can possibly be the same person as formerly. Then requires it only an insignificant cause, a trifling word, to produce a separation, whence is no return, and which no kindness can heal. The wounds which distrust gives bleed so long!

And yet, let me, my reader, here make a reservation, for my heart is full of this matter, and would fain open itself out before thee. I must, then, solemnly protest against that which I have just asserted. No; I believe it not. The *real*, the *genuine* friends do not separate!

There are people whose words fall like a frosty day on the earth, and make all that is blooming and odorous vanish. They say—"All is vanity under the sun." This may seem great, that lovely and pleasant; but who may put his confidence in men? That which at the first is hot, grows all the more speedily cool. Enthusiasm cannot last, or it would soon lead to the madhouse. The daily, the customary, that is the best and safest. And then follow examples and stories "out of real life," which are to confirm all this; brand enthusiasm as folly; designate love and friendship as a fleeting effervescence, or as selfish sentiments; reduce man to a nullity; and convert life into dishwater. And truly it is only too certain, that life has a very empty, dry, and poverty-stricken side; that many a purple mantle on the scene is only painted; many a flame goes up in smoke; that the glittering jewel on closer examination proves only a bit of glass; and that which appears alive is inwardly dead. What then? Because a pool dries up, shall we therefore not believe in the fresh spring? Because a meteor and a street-lamp go out, are there then no eternal sun—no heavenly, holy lights? God be praised and blessed! there are those which warm and light us to all eternity. And if the immortal clearness of our own life and heart remained not, it were not worth the trouble of living!

It is a sad experience—who can describe its bitterness?—when we see the friend on whom we have built for eternity grow cold in his feelings, and becoming lost to us. But believe it not, thou loving, sorrowful soul, believe it not! Continue only true to thyself, and the moment will come when thy friend will return to thee; when, at the sound of

thy voice, at the pressure of thy hand, his heart will beat quicker; yes, though the separation last long—

And pressed I here no more the ardent hand,
I yet should grasp it in the better land.

Yes, there, where all delusions cease—there, beyond the clouds, the friend will find thee again in a clearer light, will acknowledge thee, and unite himself to thee for ever.

But, friendly reader, I probably weary thee with my digressions. Pardon me, and follow me back, on the little serpentine path of a flower-simile, which it is impossible for me to pass by.

Evening is a precious time for friends who live together. Married people know it well, and brothers and sisters know it too. Contrary to the flowers of nature, which close their chalice at the close of the day, the loveliest flower of friendship—confidence—expands most at evening, and breathes forth its fragrance most gladly under the protection of twilight and silence. Then talk we over the question of the day; then conclude we peace with our hearts, if we have opened them before to our friend; then seek we reconciliation from heaven and offer it to the world, ere yet the night comes; then sleep we soundly and sweetly!

Thus was it formerly with Edla and Nina. Now it was otherwise. How gladly would Edla as formerly, at the evening of a day which they had not spent together, have looked into Nina's soul. Now Nina came constantly so late from company, that Edla did not venture further to abridge her sleep, which in her now fatiguing life was become more requisite than ever. In the morning Nina naturally slept long, and scarcely was she dressed when the Countess appeared to take her down. Nina was too weak to oppose herself to this despotism, which she moreover, through the wishes of her father, and through Edla's sullen silence, thought must be right. Yes, she even believed that it was really most agreeable to Edla to be able to follow undisturbed her favourite pursuits.

One day Edla was seized with a violent nervous headache. According to her custom she suffered without complaining, and lay perfectly still on her sofa. Every one who has experienced this complaint knows how unpleasantly anything ugly and annoying operates, during its paroxysm, on the

senses of the sufferer. Nina sate by Edla and read to her with a low voice, while Edla refreshed herself with gazing on the pure sweet features of her sister, and found the presence of the beloved and beautiful like a longed-for heart's cordial. Then came the Countess to call Nina. There were several acquaintances below; it was wished to act some scenes from Frithiof's Saga; Nina was wanted, nothing could be done without Nina—Nina! the new, lovely Ingeborg. But Nina was happy with her sister, who looked so affectionately on her; happy in the thought that she alleviated her suffering, and rejoiced her by reading. She cast an imploring glance at her sister, and asked in a tone which solicited a yes:

“Do you need me, Edla?”

Edla misunderstood both look and tone; a breath of bitterness passed over her soul, and she answered with some sharpness:

“No! go only, I need thee not.”

Nina hastily arose. The answer went like a stab to her heart. She followed the Countess. At the door she stood still; she felt an earnest desire to press to her lips the beloved hand which thus cast her forth; her heart swelled with tenderness and grief; but Edla just then turned her face towards the wall. The Countess begged her not to linger. Nina pressed her hand on her agonised bosom and went.

Edla had turned away from Nina—wherefore? Because two great tears against her will rolled down her cheeks. How many fathers, how many mothers, have wept such tears over their favourite!—and certainly with greater cause. These are bitter tears. But Edla never felt a pain without steeling her heart against it; she never shed a tear without a vigorous resolution ripening itself through it. This was the case now. A thought which had long hovered indistinctly before her soul, struck in this hour firm root; and whilst every pulse in her head throbbed painfully and her heart beat unquietly, she arranged with calm determination a plan for the future. The necessary condition for a possible quietude of life is a clear judgment of ourselves, of those with whom we share our days, and of the relationship in which we stand one to another. Without this judgment there is everlasting confusion; with it, on the contrary, peace and clearness! Nina did not return till towards midnight.

Soft and gently as the west wind passing over flowers, she approached Edla's bed. Her eyes were closed. Nina believed that she slept, and stooped over to kiss her hand; but the hand moved itself, laid itself tenderly round Nina's neck, and drew her sweet countenance to Edla's cheek. "Good night!" whispered the sisters to each other. It did their hearts good; they best understood each other. Nina slept with a happy angel-smile, and a mild firm thought lay on Edla's quiet brow. When the first rays of morning illumined the chamber, Edla's suffering was past; she felt only a slight faintness in her limbs; but her projected plan was fixed in her soul more firmly than ever. She reviewed it once more.

"My father needs me no longer; his wife is at present all for him. I see that he avoids me; that my presence gives him no pleasure. Nina is delighted with new friends and pleasures; I cannot, and would not, withhold them from her. I will be no impediment to her; I will not spoil her enjoyments; I will not, like a gloomy shadow, hang over her days. She shall not learn to regard seriousness as something irksome, nor find her truest friend troublesome. Perhaps at this moment I am not that for her which I really ought to be. Perhaps something mistrustful and wearisome has stolen into my soul; perhaps I cannot now be just even to my father, to his wife, nor yet to Nina; perhaps I feel a real bitterness, because I am all at once so totally forgotten, so superfluous—as it is, however, quite natural, it may be, that I should be so. They enjoy the beautiful, the agreeable, the exhilarating,—none of which I am. Have they done me also a certain injustice—should Nina especially—Nina not feel towards me as she ought—should—Oh! she shall learn this through no ill-will, through no ill-humour on my part. I will go hence, that Nina may know nothing of this—but I will come back and then press her afresh to my bosom. Only for a brief moment can Nina estrange herself from me—she will soon belong to me again. She is the child of my heart, nothing can part her from me for ever. But now I am here, a troubling burden to all in the house. Therefore I will withdraw. My cousin S—— needs now a helpful friend. I will go to her for some months. I will free my own family from a disturbing influence, from a silent reproof. My soul shall be refreshed by a new activity. I will return with a better

mind, with fresher thought; and I hope then to contemplate the relationships here with a more impartial eye. I shall then be more useful to my friends, and, above all, to Nina. May Nina in the mean time look round more tranquilly on the life which now dazzles her; she will not long deceive herself; my letters will to this end be more effectual than my presence can be. I will not disquiet myself concerning her; a pure light, a noble feeling, dwells in the depths of her soul—it will shape its own way. When I return, I shall find her eye clear—she will find again her friend, and I my child!”

As these thoughts passed through Edla's soul, she stood at the window and saw the wind travel amongst the clouds, which flew rapidly on in grey and white masses, and let the stars, already paling at the approach of day, glance forth. Edla contemplated with pleasure the hurrying clouds, and the fixed eternal stars. So stands the spirit of man in the unquiet world. The clouds of error vanish, and the pure light shines again in the heaven of humanity.

Edla loved the stars. From her childhood she had held converse with them. In hours of trouble, in the moments of prayer, in those in which her soul yearned after communion with higher spirits, she had often seen the clouds divide, and the stars beam down upon her. This view had always wonderfully strengthened her. She attached no distinct thoughts to this star-greeting, but she felt it as the sympathy of a friend, as an invigorating glance from the eye of the Almighty. From the time that Edla had believed that she should find no friend on earth, she had accustomed herself to look for one in the stars, and had never felt her heart deceived. Besides they were so beautiful, so elevating! Their infinitude causes the Creator to appear so great—the actions and passions of men so small!

CHAPTER XI.

THE WOOING; AN OLD SONG TO A NEW TUNE.

PROFESSOR A * * * TO EDLA.

“You will not partake my fortunes. Edla! you refuse my hand, and desire only the half of my heart! The other half you make a present of to some wife — whom I shall never find. Possess yourself of more impressive words and more

effective arguments to make a man deny himself a happiness which he regards as the highest upon earth. Edla! you have permitted your friend to speak the unvarnished truth to you ; yes, Edla! I have learned to love you for the sake of the love I cherish for my goddess, Truth : through my love of Truth, I have alienated most of my so-called friends, frightened away all my acquaintances. You alone, Edla, feared not my rough sincerity ; I did not offend you by it ; you heard and understood me. You stand alone now as my best, my most sincere friend, the only one to whom I could without fear open my heart ; and I acknowledge it as a happiness, that I can venture to say to you boldly, that you have not in your answer dealt truly and honestly by me. You answer me as an ordinary woman dismisses an ordinary man. Foolish reasons! petty considerations! how can Edla condescend to use them?—‘ You are old and ugly!’ Very well, Edla, I admit that you are an old maid. How old? Perhaps forty. Well then, you are in the best years of a woman, which one may assert without being a fool, like Balzac. Don’t talk to me, I beseech you, of your girls of seventeen. They are lovely flowers, I hear you say. Very well! but I know not, in fact, what I shall say to them any more than to a pretty flower—that is, at most, ‘ You are excessively charming!’ or perhaps—‘ Have you danced much this winter?’ At forty a woman has at once flowers and fruit. My *mère* made my father happy in her forty-third year, and her son had the happiness of his parents’ society for five-and-twenty years. One can with less than this be content.

“ ‘ You are plain ;’ yes, you *are* plain, *uncommonly* plain. I hardly know a countenance which at the first sight is so repellent. ‘ You have also something stiff, something disagreeable.’ Yes, you have all that, I concede you that, Edla. Sincerely beloved Edla! Silly, childish, unphilosophical woman! understand you not, that one can love you with all this ; yes, precisely on this very account? Precisely because you are plain, Edla, do I love you all the more. Were you handsome ; had you only the most usual attraction of woman, then I should fear lest a less exalted feeling mingled itself in my love. But you are ‘ plain,’ ‘ disagreeable,’ and therefore do I love you, Edla ; therefore do I love you warmly.

There is a beauty which is not external, which gives no outward testimony of itself. My love to this makes me believe in immortality! And because you are not beautiful, do you think that I cannot love you? How womanish, miserable, silly, do you make me, when you believe that nothing else can enchant me than what things and beasts possess as well as human beings!

“ ‘ You are tedious;’ God forgive you the untruth, Edla; as certainly as all our gossiping, empty nonsense-gabbling women will do it. Believe me, Edla, there is more life in your silent presence than in the conversation of most men. But once more, seriously—have you actually intended what you said? Have you believed that I could admit it? No, Edla, you have not! You are not so weak, not so childish! You have deceived yourself and me. I suspect other reasons, of which you say nothing. And why do you not speak them sincerely out? You do not love me. You do not participate in the feeling which I cherish for you. Good! or rather—bad! But you know my views on this subject. Women do not so necessarily need the love of the husband to whom they unite themselves. Esteem, confidence,—these are requisite to them; and the obligations of honour; the quiet of the house; the activity of the day, together with all higher familiar life, chain them at last with sincere affection to the friend they have chosen. This every-day’s experience teaches us. O Edla! why should you not in a similar manner become active and happy? Should you condemn the lot of a wife because you know more of the world than the majority of your sex? Then fling your wisdom into the sea! Listen, Edla! Had you a decided, productive talent; were you born to be an artist, or an author,—I would not use so many words to persuade you to marry. But you are not that. You have an ear for life, but no tongue to express it. Can it give you joy only to vegetate, without being useful to a fellow-creature, without living for the happiness and good of another? Edla! take my hand; become my wife; the friend of my friends, the joy-diffuser of my house. Make happy a husband who henceforth will live only for you.

“ You doubt the truth of my love! Do you expect that I shall sigh, complain, fall at your feet? That I shall threaten

to destroy myself, and enact one of those drunken scenes with which the modern romances inundate the frivolous world? That I cannot do, Edla! and you certainly do not desire it. But believe that I love you. Judge of my attachment by rational evidences. Edla! I am not happy without your presence. All that I do, think, write—that requires your sight, your approbation; without this, it has no value for me! But I disdain to dilate upon this, to vow, and protest,—for fourteen years Edla has called me friend, and has not doubted my word. Why should she doubt it in the very moment in which I open my heart to the core, and say, ‘I love thee?’ Is this, however, only an empty subterfuge, behind which other reasons conceal themselves? Then it is probably, when translated into the language of truth, ‘I fear to give thee my hand, because thou art an Atheist, because thou dost not believe in a God, in immortality; thou art a lost soul.’ Can you believe that, Edla? Can you pronounce that in me to be a crime which does not lie in the power of our will? It is true that my understanding does not acknowledge the doctrine out of which you and many others draw so much happiness. But show me the spot which dishonours me as a man; and then you will have a right to reproach me with the want of faith. Has a word, has a smile upon my lips, ever derided that which to another is holy? Then, Edla, turn away from me as from an unworthy one. Have I ever, since I have become a man, spoken an untruth? then, Edla, believe me no longer, then mistrust also my love. Yes, I will say still more. I have often indulged the hope of the possibility, that before the evening of my days descend, I may yet recognise a higher light, may yet participate in a faith so beautiful, and so full of blessings. I long, I yearn after it. I too am old, Edla; and my fiftieth year, though it has yet brought no chill into my heart, shows me by the snow silently falling on my temples that the winter is come. Edla, my dear friend! will you not bring me warmth in the cold season? not kindle that light which shall cheer my evening? If a human being can do this, it is thou, so gentle, and so sensible.

“ ‘Another wife!’ I beseech you, Edla, spare me this comfort, this hope, this other wife, who, if I understand you properly—shall be a sort of good sheep. Be you mine

Edla! Let me hope it, or give me better, more solid grounds for a 'No,' which opposes itself to my happiness.

"Yours, A."

EDLA TO PROFESSOR A * * *

"The reasons which I advanced, my friend, were not false. I have spoken the truth, but perhaps I should have expressed it more clearly. My age, dear A., forbids me to think of a change in my present condition of life; but I *alone* am in a situation properly to estimate and to judge of this change. My plainness would not seem hazardous to me, could I but surmount the repugnance to exposing it to the gaze of men; and it is not simply the feeling of my plainness—that I could bear—but that hardness and repulsiveness of my disposition, which makes me for others unaccommodating and unpleasing. Even early in my childhood I felt this. The eye of my mother fell on me with a cold and repelling gaze. Forgive me, stern shade! In the future I hope to love thee, and then will thy glance rest kindly on thy daughter. Then will all involuntary hardness dissolve, and will my rigid disposition melt; then shall I also become amiable. But here, on earth, that cannot be; here there is, as it were, a strange power chained to me, which works disturbingly, turn which way I will. I am not agreeable to others, not agreeable with others, dear A. I feel that, and it constrains and embarrasses me in every action, in every sentiment—I cannot conquer it.

"For you, A * * *, I feel the sincerest esteem, the most genuine friendship; and nothing in your person could prevent me giving you my hand, if I were actually persuaded that I should thereby be doing what is good and proper. I have already written to you explicitly on this head, and will not now weary you with my repetitions. A few words, however, I must here add.

"I honour the vocation of woman, as wife, mother, and mistress of a family, with my whole heart. Why should I not? I know nothing more beautiful. But I feel nothing in me which gives surety that I myself should fulfil it. You speak of the uselessness of my life. I might bid you look at Nina. Till lately I might also have said—'Behold the happy eye of my father!' But I will not appeal to

things which have a universal claim on the outward activity of men. I might say—‘Oh, do not call it pride—look into my heart!’ There incessantly labours the desire to do good, not unworthy of the great Master whom we ought to follow. I sometimes think that I shall one day discover the word for that which works so deeply and honestly within me, on which I so seriously meditate,—but perhaps I deceive myself; perhaps this moment will never come for me on earth. Be that, however, as it may, I do not therefore fear that I work in vain. They are the HAPPY on earth, who live for the good of others; but they too have not lived in vain, who have laboured still and meditatively at the work of improvement in their own bosoms. Must every virtue, every power, be a useless one, which does not exercise itself in the fulfilment of human duties? The life-long captive, cut off for ever from the world, builds a temple to God in his own heart; the anchorite, who places himself in a position through acquired knowledge to illuminate the world,—believe you, my friend, that these live in vain? that they will not also one day find a theatre on which they may labour beneficially, if not in this, certainly in another world? I know this is not your belief, but it is mine in the deepest regions of my heart. As regards the usefulness of my life I am at rest.

“You call upon me to give light to the evening of your days. Ah! there you touch a chord in my heart which vibrates painfully through it. Could I do, could I accomplish that which you desire and hope? I fear not. My friend, I know that I could not! Have we not often exchanged our thoughts on this subject? Have we not discussed these important matters repeatedly? And what fruit has this produced? I have contributed nothing to you, and you—pardon me! I must say it—you have often wounded me deeply. Believe me, my good friend, it has never come into my mind to call you an atheist, for your whole life testifies of the God in whom you believe, and who lives in you—to use the words of a great poet—‘THE GOD WHOM YOU DENY AVENGES HIMSELF UPON YOU BY SETTING HIS STAMP ON YOUR ACTIONS.’ In your works you are a good Christian; while your understanding, or rather the spirit of contradiction which dwells in your heart, refuses the acknowledgment. But this spirit and this incessant doubt disquiet my soul.

Ah! life has so many darkening clouds, so many bewildering enigmas, that we cannot carefully enough guard our minds against every intruding gloom. You have cast many a black doubt upon my days, how should I enlighten your evening? You require a wife of a different mind, with a higher strength of soul than I possess.

“Do you not know, have you never seen the sweet simple wife whose whole being is love; in whose heart words discover themselves which desire not to be spoken, and which yet operate as an illumination? I might term such an one a feminine Apostle John; for she reposes on the bosom of her lord, and is admitted to his most intimate confidence. She draws from the original fountain of love, and thence is it that her wisdom is so deep, her glance so full of blessing, her words so persuasive. She has no arguments for the immortality of the soul, but heaven stands open to her eye, and she has an immediate beam of God. To your doubts, to your questionings, such a wife would reply: ‘Let us be happy! Let us love one another! Let us not vex ourselves with these matters! All will one day become clear, all will be good.’ And this word, so poor, so trite, that every commonplace person conceals his sluggishness behind it, becomes a revelation on the lips of a pious, affectionate feminine disciple. See, A * * *, this is the wife that you must seek. She alone can warm your heart, enlighten your evening; on her bosom will your soul find rest. Reasons cannot always be answered with counter-reasons; evidences, with counter-evidences; before such a faith, such a conviction, your desire of combat will become still, and you will yourself be made capable of listening to the suggestions of your own soul.

“You speak of your love to me. Yes, I certainly hope that I am dear to you. This hope is dear, is necessary to me; but LOVE! LOVE TO ME! No, A * * *, that I cannot believe. I have alluded to your spirit of contradiction; forgive me if I revert to it, and regard it as the cause whence your liking for me has arisen. You were always proud and defiant, dear A * * *, and love to combat with difficulties. You now seek me so zealously, because I retire before you—the consenting Edla would soon be no longer the warmly-beloved Edla. Talk not to me of your love, A * * *, I do

not believe you ; I do not believe in my own power to inspire such a feeling. I am become too old for fairy tales. Let me continue your friend as before ; continue what you were to me. It is thus best for us both.

“ Faithfully, and for ever your friend,
“ EDLA.”

PROFESSOR A * * * TO EDLA.

“ You were right, Edla, when you said beforehand that you should only repeat what you had said. Your letter contains only your former assertions, your empty reasons, or rather un-reasons. The only novelty which struck me was ‘ The Spirit of Contradiction,’ which is quartered in my brain, and gives itself the trouble to dictate to me my words and actions. The natural consequence of which is, that I really do not know what I say, or what I protest. I thank you for this information. But as it lies sincerely at my heart to convince you of the contrary, and as I find in your letter no reasons besides what you had before assigned, allow me, best Edla, to take no notice of them, and by no means to give up the hope of one day calling you my wife. You may greet most kindly from me the St. John ladies. None of them will ever be my wife ! Edla, or none !

“ THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION.”

Edla was at once vexed and flattered by the obstinacy of her friend, but only the faster, therefore, clung she to the thoughts of her departure. She knew, indeed, an amiable person who had long loved the Professor A * * *. She regarded her as wholly made for him, and cherished the hope that he would one day be convinced of her suitability. From the distant bound of her journey she would write to her friend, of Charlotte D. She prepared all in silence for her exit, and then spoke with her father respecting it. The deranged affairs of her cousin S. were made the ostensible occasion of her journey. The President heard her in silence, and then said with a faltering voice, “ that she was probably in the right ; that she was perfectly free to act according to her own pleasure,” and withdrew hastily, leaving her alone with a troubled heart.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PIECE OF WORK.

Sword-ages, axe-ages,
Storm-ages, murder-ages,
Before the world falls.

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*
Around the world's tree
Hot vapour ascendeth;
The red flame aspireth
'Gainst heaven itself.—*Wala's Song.*

IN the mean time Miss Greta had her trial with Clara. She found her every day more interesting and intolerable. She became to her constantly more and more a stone of stumbling and of offence. One day it occurred to her to prepare a joy for the joyless girl. She went out with the Countess to make purchases, and the whole forenoon they went from one shop to another, from Medberg to Folker, from Folker to Giron. The Countess returned home with numberless packages—with stuffs, shawls, and other fashionable articles. Miss Greta had selected two beautiful necklaces of amethyst and coral, that Clara might choose one of them. Her heart rejoiced beforehand in this surprise; she thought only at this moment of the forlorn position of the poor girl, and had forgotten all her indifference and tediousness.

The Countess busied herself for three successive hours with her purchases. This was intended for Nina, that for Miss Greta, this for Edla, and the chief articles for herself. Not the slightest trifle was for Clara, that she might duly feel the disfavour in which she stood.

But Clara seemed not to notice this punishment. After she had honestly given her opinion of the beauty and colour of the purchases, acquainted herself exactly with the price, and fulfilled all the duties of sympathy, she seated herself in silence and indifference by the fire, and to Miss Greta's wrath went on with her sewing.

Miss Greta was but just come in. She took a chair, placed herself kindly by Clara, and showed her the two necklaces, with the question whether they were not pretty?

A glance from Clara, with a feeble "yes," was all the answer which Miss Greta received.

“And which seems to you the prettiest of the two?” continued Miss Greta, without allowing herself to be amazed.

“I scarcely know,” replied Clara, with a voice which made one feel at the same time the trouble of the answer; “I understand so little about things of that sort.”

“Things of that sort!” repeated Miss Greta to herself, and was on the point of becoming angry; but the desire to give her pleasure triumphed, and she inquired further: “Don’t you think the coral one the handsomer; or would the amethyst probably suit better a darker complexion?”

“Probably,” answered Clara, in the most absent tone, while she turned more diligently than ever to her work. That was too much for Miss Greta; at such rudeness all her gall was stirred.

“That is a very pretty piece of work,” said she, seizing on Clara’s beloved sewing; “but as it withholds you from what is much handsomer and of much more importance—namely, from mere politeness and a few minutes’ time for an answer—I will herewith rid you of this impediment.”

And before the surprised Clara could divine her purpose, the beautiful work lay on the fire. Her first movement was to spring forward and snatch it from the flames, but these had closed already over it, and in a few seconds it was destroyed for ever. Clara stood speechless, and gazed into the destroying flames; Miss Greta regarded her attentively. When this fine work was completely reduced to ashes, two great tears rolled over Clara’s cheeks, and she went out without saying a word, without casting a look at Miss Greta.

The state of mind in which Miss Greta was, it is not easy to describe. She looked after Clara, she looked into the flame, and had a great mind to send the two necklaces after it; but she restrained herself, and pondered on something better.

At the dinner-table Clara appeared with red and downcast eyes, but her countenance bore at the same time an expression of patience which went to Miss Greta’s heart. As Clara once raised her eyes, and their glances met, Miss Greta was involuntarily compelled to cast hers down.

After dinner, Clara was in a room near the saloon, and was examining some newly-arrived engravings, when she

suddenly felt a hand laid lightly on her shoulder, and another held the two eventful necklaces kindly before her eyes. It was Miss Greta, who said seriously and cordially,

"Pardon me, Clara! Forgive my hastiness. Bestow now once more a look on these two necklaces, and try whether 'such things' cannot please you. I had intended to beg your acceptance of one of them; now I beseech you earnestly, as a token of your pardon, to accept both, and to regard them as a little trifling substitute for the burned lace, whose fate I earnestly wish might withhold you from beginning any other fresh piece. My good Clara, accept these. Give me your forgiveness!"

Clara blushed deeply; she glanced at Miss Greta a look so beautiful that Miss Greta's heart was again touched with the sentiment which she had before experienced, and without further hesitation, she placed the ornament on Clara's neck. But Clara held back her head, and exclaimed, "No, no! That is too much—too much—I cannot!"

"Things of that sort," said Miss Greta. "Good! But, dear Clara, if you will not do it from compulsion, do it then out of pity, that yonder flame may no longer scorch my conscience."

"That shall it not," said Clara. "All is forgotten; I recollect only your goodness."

"Take them, then!" cried Miss Greta, *in imperativus modus*.

Clara contemplated the ornament. After a short silence, she said,

"Do you permit me, lady, to do what I will with it?"

"Assuredly, yes; but I will now see them first on your neck."

"But then—then I acquire the right to dispose of them as I please?"

"Yes, to be sure! yes! that follows of course. Take them only out of my hand."

Clara took one of the necklaces; more could Miss Greta, neither by one means nor another, obtain from her. And as she took this from Miss Greta, she at the same time seized the hand, and kissed it with so deep an emotion, that the friendly giver, herself deeply moved, embraced her tenderly, thinking the while to herself, "He must really, however, be

a very strange man, this secret lover, who absorbs so many lace collars and caps, and now will swallow my costly necklace too. I would fain see him, the fellow!"

Miss Greta had seen much of the world. It had often delighted her to trace out the little Momus who sits in the background of the soul, and plays his game with a man's better self; allows him to utter untruths, to be guilty of follies, or boastings, all for the indulgence of a little pride, a little vanity, or yet less noble quality. Miss Greta had so often seen the rogue, that she had nearly accustomed herself to consider him as an indweller of human nature, and in general she had more faith in petty than in higher matters. But spite of the secret affair in which Clara had become implicated, and which testified against her, Miss Greta could not prevail upon herself to believe that anything dishonourable lurked behind it. It seemed to her utterly impossible that the said rogue could play his game also with Clara's soul; she was in her heart persuaded that the tulle-swallowing lover would at last turn out to be a right honourable honest fellow.

The next day a far more tragical event occurred, and it suggests itself to us to put the reader in possession of it.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OIL PAINTING.

Make thy picture fair, my son,
Drink, and take thy wage when done.

BELLMAN.

FILIUS had some grand but rather dim notions about fresco-painting, the origin and definite form of which in his young brain we can render no account, but merely communicate their results. In the first place it excited in Clara the greatest astonishment, when she, in the act of compounding a lobster salad, found the newly-filled oil flasks nearly emptied to the last drop, while the walls and steps of the basement story, had they had the power of reasoning and communication, would have expressed their astonishment at finding themselves one fine evening embellished with splendid landscapes in red ochre and Provence oil. But the greatest and worst surprise was reserved for Miss Greta, who descending

the steps with unsuspecting freedom, set her foot on a highway of Filius's work, slipped, and plunged her whole length into the unlucky landscape. As she recovered her senses, and attempted to rise, she found herself deprived of the use of both arms. She next cast a glance at her silk dress, at her costly shawl, and fantastic pictures of the Red Sea, and of the confusion at the Tower of Babel, swept through her brain, while she found it difficult to suppress a loud cry of pain. The servants who rushed to her found her sitting still and pale as death; she had not words to explain the occurrence, and her Roman stoicism scorned to complain. Thus was she carried carefully up the slippery steps. I pass over the alarm of the family, the consternation of the Baron, and the severe castigation which Filius for the first time received from his foster-father, and which one would have thought enough to have taken from him for ever all passion for fresco-painting.

The doctors were assembled for a painful operation on Miss Greta. Her right arm was found to be broken close above the elbow, the left was dislocated, and must be wrenched back with haste and violence to be re-set. A Spartan dame could not have displayed more quiet and fortitude than Miss Greta. As Clara hastened in with a countenance of deadly paleness, and the most expressive signs of horror and anxiety, Miss Greta even forgot herself, and felt a kind of rapture at this un hoped outburst of feeling. She regarded Clara, scarcely believing her own eyes, and said, "Smell some eau de Cologne, Clara, and give me a little too; we seem both to have need of it." She then turned at once to the doctors, and said, "I am ready, gentlemen."

Edla and Clara were the only ladies present at the operation; Miss Greta endured it with the greatest firmness, and it was not till all was over that she fell into a violent agitation of the nerves. Edla during the whole proceeding had preserved her accustomed presence of mind, and afforded the most active assistance. Clara was too violently agitated to be able to do anything, and only sighed softly with folded hands, "My God! my God!" When all was over she embraced the sufferer with streaming tears, and whispered, "Does it not give you excessive pain? Is it not dreadfully agonising?"

Clara's tears operated more beneficially on Miss Greta than

all the drops and perfumed water with which they sprinkled her. She was surprised and touched at this evidence of sincere attachment. She could not at this moment speak, but she gazed at Clara with a look full of cordiality, and nodded to her in token of satisfaction.

As Miss Greta could not be conveyed to her own house, Clara's chamber was converted into a sick-room, and she became at the same time Miss Greta's affectionate and devoted nurse. Now these two souls first learned to know each other, and the silent room of suffering opened up to them a life of the most beautiful reciprocal attachment and joy.

Every man is surrounded by a spiritual atmosphere, which shows better than anything of what spirit he is the child. In accordance with this he works enliveningly or oppressively; beneficially or disquietingly; yes, even into inanimate things he breathes somewhat of his own atmosphere, and they become beautiful or not, according to the nature of the spirit which they serve. In worldly life there are so many storms, so many draughts,—all doors and windows stand open,—that these ethereal atmospheres are difficult of perception: yes, the world, or its planets—men—whirl so hastily round their sun—pleasure—that it is impossible for them to know and understand each other. People are scarcely aware of each other; they hurry past, and greet one another as Venus! Mercury! Mars! the Moon! Comet! Nebulus! (their number is Legion) Vesta! Pallas! etc. But that is all. At certain points of life, for instance in the family circle, in the chamber, in the sick-room, we recognise the soul. Here has she her free atmosphere, and can demonstrate her most peculiar character.

If Miss Greta had read these reflections, she would unquestionably have poured forth a whole troop of jocose remarks on the human planets and their atmospheres, and have injured the seriousness of my thoughts; at the same time it is certain that she experienced their truth. With wonder she felt the beneficent influence of Clara's presence and quiet activity. All her movements and assistance were so full of repose, so still and gentle, and yet so skilful and certain, that they fell like a balm on Miss Greta's nerves. As she placed her pillow, it was sure to be the most comfortable; when she opened the curtains a little, she let in exactly the

most agreeable portion of light ; where she set down things, there stood they certainly in the best position. And then—that look of sincerest sympathy, that scarcely obvious, and yet never-ceasing attention to the invalid ! The very person whom Miss Greta had found so heavy, so unapproachable, so impracticable altogether, now spared no pains, no exertion, in order to ameliorate a suffering new to her. She became speedily the most skilful surgeon for the sick ; she was not only the most excellent nurse, but also the most agreeable companion. In the night, when Miss Greta could not sleep, Clara displayed a talent which so many imagine themselves to possess, but which actually so few do possess, and on which Miss Greta set the greatest value—that of reading well aloud. Her pure pronunciation and pleasant voice delighted her listener so much the more, as she read with a simple and sensible expression. Miss Greta, whose mind was now only occupied with Clara, soon discovered in her a ruling desire and innate propensity to render assistance and to diminish anything in the shape of suffering and care ; and though she soon discovered also that Clara's attachment to her sprang rather from her general love of her fellow-creatures than from any personal prepossession, Miss Greta only felt herself therefore the more obliged to honour her, and desired all the more ardently to be beloved by her. Whilst she read with so keen an eye Clara's soul, there awoke in her own new and unknown feelings ; and for Clara also there opened a new heaven ; life acquired for her a charm that it had not possessed before. Clara's inward purity mirrored itself in her outward manner. Miss Greta had hitherto regarded her as too pedantic in the extreme care which she expended on her dress, and on her whole exterior appearance. In her sick-chamber she now experienced only the pleasantness of it. The most precious perfumes could not operate more agreeably on the senses than that fresh breath of pure neatness which constantly enveloped Clara, and which was in fact her cestus of Venus. They who are so happy as to have a Clara about them, know well the power and charm of this highest feminine beauty.

Clara again, on her part, admired and honoured most sincerely the heroic patience of Miss Greta : her strength of soul, her perpetual good-humour, and her friendliness never

varying even in the sharpest pains. Now first did she listen to her words and assertions. The rich treasures of knowledge of men and the world, the genuine humour with which she spoke and observed, opened to Clara a new world. She became acquainted with a side of life which till now had been completely hidden to her; she heard satire which was destitute of bitterness; she followed a keen gaze into the follies of the world, but which, however, always rested on its object with kindness and sagacity: these opened to her a life full of enjoyment, accomplishment, and instruction, to which hitherto she had never lent heart nor ear; and Clara's capability of understanding, of listening and answering, and even of joking, equally surprised and amazed Miss Greta. At the same time it often appeared as if Clara feared these new impressions; as if she would withdraw herself from the involuntary gladness which thus affected her. Then she became suddenly silent; then she was observed to sew more diligently than ever, and deep into the night. Miss Greta frequently watched her, when she thought herself unobserved, and saw how she suddenly folded her hands and gazed up towards heaven, as if she would lay her whole soul in the bosom of God. Miss Greta herself experienced in such moments a feeling which she could not explain. Sometimes there came across her the supposition that Clara was Catholic, and had taken the vow of chastity and labour. Then again recurred to her the walks and the needlework-devouring lover, and led off her thoughts in a quite different direction. Thus she tormented herself with a thousand enigmas and speculations. But while Clara sews and Miss Greta ponders, we will withdraw the veil from this silent world of prayer and patience. We will seek Clara during her childhood and youth in her father's house, and cast a glance on such scenes, as they often—only much too often—present themselves on the Theatre of Every-day Life.

CHAPTER XIV.

CLARA.

Amor mio, non più del mondo——. ST. CATHERINE.

CLARA's father was a learned man, but a dry one—a perfect encyclopædia whose heart dried itself up into an ARTICLE. Her mother was a lovely woman, full of heart and spirit, of

gentle birth, endowed with a proud mind, and more than that, with a blind enthusiasm. There are prosaic inflexibilities, as well as poetic impossibilities; bring these together, marry them in fact, and you have prepared the most wretched household on earth. The deep and the beautiful may unite themselves, since these have as necessary a connexion as root and flower; it is the most glorious union that is found in life. But petrified forms and unbridled animal spirits agree like fire and water. Such was the connexion between Clara's father and mother. He loved her at first, because she was beautiful, and admired his acquirements. She married him out of blind enthusiasm for knowledge and science, and because he paid her homage. She hoped every day to make a pilgrimage to heaven; he hoped every day to have a better dinner. Both deceived themselves. From that time he despised her deficiency in knowledge: she his pedantic formality.

"You don't understand that! you have no conception of it!" were the words she daily heard. "You are tasteless! you are intolerable!" was the answer which was never withheld. She opposed the energy of her will to his reasoning despotism. Neither would concede; neither would offer the hand to the other; and thus their days became the prey of contentions, their house a home of injustice and bitterness. He humiliated her with the double power of his official dignity and his learning; she, who had been brought up elegantly, and who throughout her childhood and youth had been only flattered and caressed, defended herself against him with the power of the trodden snake. He oppressed her; she pierced him with a poisoned sting. As happy married people think only how they can make each other happy, they now studied only how they might cause each other anger and mortification. He was awkward and inexperienced in all affairs of common life; she disorderly and negligent in the internal affairs of the house. Five little children demanded support, and cried for bread. Poverty soon presented itself; and cold, hunger, and want, were the dry sticks with which Discord daily heated her hell. How it burned! how it darted forth its flames! In a short time, it might be said of this house as it is said in the legend of Hel's dwelling, "Misery was its parlour, hunger its knife, starvation its key, procrastina-

tion its maid, treachery its threshold, decay its roof, consumption its bed, and pale agony its clothing."

Is there a married pair who recognise themselves in this mirror: O Lord God, have mercy on them!

In this house Clara grew up; and a sister partook this fate. The brothers were made over to relations for support; the daughters alone must bear the cross of the house. For Clara's sister was found what was called a good match; and she married with the hope of liberating herself and her sister. She hoped to find in her husband a friend, and found a tyrant; but she bore it with patience, and bowed herself deeper and deeper till she found rest in the grave.

Clara was left alone. Alone in this house of hatred and complaining; alone after the sacrificed sister; alone—but no! People assert often that where discontent prevails in a house, the husband is the least unhappy; he can go forth, he can comfort himself, he has the world, so it is asserted. I do not think so. I am of opinion that the wife has or may have the better lot; I know that she has hard by the gates of the domestic hell a certain place of refuge—heaven! Thither Clara betook herself for escape; and amid the domestic storms, in an atmosphere of bitterness, beneath constant labour of body and soul, there she found peace. But if people did but know how she prayed! Prayer is the key of the gate of heaven. It does not open it easily. It requires strength, indefatigable knocking, a firm, determined will; but is the door but once open—behold! then there is no further separation between thee and the Almighty; and the angels of the Lord ascend and descend to bring thee consolation and help. Thou who sufferest perhaps like Clara, yearnest for repose like her, O listen! Sip not lightly at the cup of salvation! Drink deep draughts from the well of redemption! Fill thyself with prayer, with faith and humility, and thou wilt have peace!

Clara had as gentle a heart, as warm feelings, as vivid a longing after happiness and joy, as any other feminine soul; but she conquered all, she quieted all these within her, through prayer and labour. Her cheeks grew pale; her youth, her fresh spirit of life, vanished; but her soul became a sanctuary, and her eyes, with a mild and heavenly expres-

sion, declared its beauty and repose. As oil allays the excited waves, so operated by degrees Clara's pious and acquiescent mood on the minds of her unhappy parents. After she had reconciled and consoled them, they both died; but on her death-bed her mother discovered to her a secret, and demanded from her an oath, which darkened the whole of Clara's existence.

After the death of her parents she was taken by the Countess Natalie, and transplanted to a new world and a new life's atmosphere. But her soul had acquired its fixed bent, and certain circumstances of her experience had already made too deep an impression on her mind. Her whole life was a sigh of compassion over the sufferings of earth; she would willingly have given her whole existence as a balm for the wounds of the world. The Saviour she loved above all things. He was her life, her whole happiness. He had said, "Come to me, ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" and she went to him, and her soul found rest. She followed him thenceforth, and did His will.

In outward and agitated life, in all undertakings, speculations, and projects—enough, in all which we commonly call life—Clara saw only burdens and unnecessary labours. But nothing did she dread so much as marriage. In this she had only become acquainted with the extremest misery, the greatest anguish on earth. It appeared to her a condition of care and trouble, the voluntary choice of which she could not comprehend. To be a humble instrument of consolation for the woes of earth, without augmenting them through the afflictions of marriage, Clara regarded as the most beautiful and desirable object of existence. And in fact, when we reflect on all the disquiet, the contention and misery of this world; when we see how men urge and strive; how they make themselves slaves; how they fill themselves with anxieties, and set all at hazard,—then need we not wonder if the heart contracts itself; if people find the greatest pleasure in making themselves as little as possible, in order that they may glide through life unobserved, and yet, according to their ability, be able to help the struggling, the exhausted, and the hungry. How infinitely vain and foolish did the career of this worldly life appear to Clara! Nothing but the

heavenly benignity of her mind could have prevented her from at once heartily despising both it and they who gave themselves up to it.

Clara did not yet know that the different spheres of life are ordained through interchange to beautify and ennoble each other. The cheerful play of social life was an enigma to her; the temple of art was closed to her; and the glory of nature she had never seen. At the age of seven-and-twenty Clara had only made acquaintance with trouble and with heaven. Solitary as in her father's house stood she now in this new world, isolated in the peculiar world of her own heart. She felt that she possessed none of the gifts, none of the advantages, which men so highly value; she was conscious of being understood by no one, and therefore was she silent; therefore she enveloped herself in the deepest reserve as in a shell. If a feeling of bitterness came sometimes into her heart, it was when she saw what large sums were expended in delicacies and fashionable trifles. She thought then of the sick and the hungry; she knew from her experience what hunger was.

She had probably heard the doctrines of political economy, and the encouragement of trade; of the benefits of industry, and of the mischievous effects of almsgiving; but she was persuaded that a prudent benevolence only does good, and that a judicious assistance never can do harm; and she felt only too vividly that there are, in fact, always people who are suffering through necessity and sickness, or who win their daily bread by "the sweat of their brow." To these unfortunate ones belonged Clara's thoughts, her heart, and her plans for the future. Yet for a while must she submit herself to present circumstances, to this life of dependence, which appeared to her the hardest service. Still must she, in order to fulfil a sacred oath, prepare that adornment which seemed to her so unnecessary—she must gain money in order to expiate the sins and discharge the debts of others. Then would she go into a hospital to live for her love—a love as warm, as true, as pure, as ever lived in the human bosom for knowledge, freedom, or for honour. Here should her life glide unobserved away, amid labours that brought no regrets; and these labours should ameliorate the sufferings of others. She would not live a single day in vain.

Travel to Rome, fiery artist! Build thy house, brave citizen! Win thee a pillar of glory, O hero! Maiden fair and good, listen to the prayer of thy lover.

Women and men
Married are friends.

Build houses, take your rest—but let Clara go her own way; make room for her!—*Pax vobiscum!*

CHAPTER XV.

ON MARRIAGE.

Since how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt make thy husband happy? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt make thy wife happy?
PAUL.

MISS GRETA was now so far recovered that she was able to receive company, and to take part in conversation. All her lady friends and acquaintances hastened to pay her visits. One day came two young ladies, sisters, and both betrothed. Eva and Aurora were two pleasant, lively creatures, gladdening to the eye, delightful to the ear, fresh as roses, well dressed, well fed, active as wagtails, genuine as gold—in a word, they were charming, most loveable girls, and moreover full of life, full of views and purposes—I say nothing of penetration. They would improve the world, the good girls, the world which they fancied did not stand on a firm foot; they would ennoble mankind, and begin with their sinful betrothed lovers; they would make society, education, the state, subjects of their attention, and undertook all this with the greatest courage in the world. Miss Greta amused herself vastly with their zeal, and had the art to bring them unconsciously to the unfolding of their principles, ideas, and plans. Then came forth all sorts of unions for the support of the necessitous—amateur theatres, institutions for the care of little children, subscriptions for social institutions; but especially requests for the contribution of embroidery work, to form a lottery or a bazaar, and all this mixed up in the most wonderful confusion. Here funds were raised in the air, there great castles were built of straw,—then followed through a slight impulse an enormous movement (Archimedes himself might solve the problem), and the king and queen took the whole under their especial patronage. The

young ladies would now all at once by force ennoble and improve their fellow-men, and the great machine of state government. Miss Greta laughed heartily at their vast designs, at the same time that she did not omit to place the weakness of both sisters in the proper light; and the good children were forced to laugh too, without permitting themselves, however, to be beaten one tittle from their philanthropical plans. Clara, on the contrary, looked oppressed; she smiled sometimes, yet sighed only the oftener.

“My best Clara,” at length said Miss Greta, “you must not listen with such silence and indifference. You also will soon enter the holy state of matrimony, and then will certainly, like Eva and Aurora, think of improving your husband and your native land.”

“Ah, God preserve me!” cried Clara with a sigh which came from the lowest depths of her heart.

“How so? how so?” cried the sisters as with one voice, full of wonder.

“Dear friends,” replied Clara, blushing and with emphasis, “you think that you are preparing joy for yourselves in the future, and you will only find trouble. You believe that you shall establish good, and you will only produce mischief.”

“How so? how so?” demanded Eva and Aurora.

Miss Greta turned herself to and fro in her bed with pleasure at this contrast.

“But do speak! What do you mean? What do you mean to say?” cried Eva and Aurora.

“It will be difficult for me,” replied Clara, “to express quite clearly what I feel, and perhaps I have no thoroughly clear conceptions of these things, but I can scarcely believe that your undertakings will so far avail as to improve the world, and make you happy in your homes; yes, I confess that I already shudder at the bare thought of all institutions for that purpose. It seems to me much better and more fitting to concern ourselves rather with the things within than without the house, and to take care that every member of the family has the care and attention which are his due. Your pieces of embroidery for the poor will cost far more than the price at which one can reasonably sell them. These schemes and subscriptions, if you won't take it amiss, are properly nothing, nothing but a genteel sort of begging.

Perhaps I am wrong, but I only speak out what I think of these matters."

Aurora and Eva spared no pains to make Clara perceive how indescribably confined and one-sided were her notions. At this moment a lady entered who was received by the two young sisters with loud joy. She was related both to them and to Miss Greta, by the latter of whom she was especially esteemed.

Eleonora L. was no longer young, nor pretty, nor elegant; neither, on the other hand, was she old, nor ugly, nor ill dressed. She was both externally and internally most comfortable; moreover, neither discontented with her position in life, nor extremely indisposed to change it. And she had an opportunity for so doing, a very estimable man having now for the second time offered her his hand. She was undecided whether to say yes or no. She was full of **WHETHERS**, **IFS**, and **BUTS**; and had found herself for some time in that odd condition in which the whole existence of a person lies between the words "YES, NO, YES!" and "NO, YES, NO!"

The sisters, her cousins, who knew her perplexity, began at first cautiously and gently to approach this subject; by-and-by, however, they became bolder; and finally persuaded her to decide for wedlock, which they declared to be the greatest happiness on earth; and without which we are not in a condition to be useful to our fellow-creatures.

Eleonora looked at first on this assertion like a startled hare, but at length she collected herself so far as to debate upon it; that is, she found herself able to state her doubts and misgivings on the subject. These, however, were zealously combated and rejected.

"To make the happiness of a husband!" cried Aurora.

"To have a sphere of activity; to be able to diffuse joy, life and prosperity around one," interposed Eva.

"If we could actually effect anything," sighed Eleonora.

"To bring children into the world!" burst out Miss Greta.

"And educate them!" cried Aurora.

"Ah!" sighed Eleonora, "that is indeed the worst of all; the very thought of it deprives me of all courage. How can one be certain that we can really make the children happy, and actually give them a *good* education?"

“What do you say to it, Clara?” demanded Miss Greta.
 “Say, what would you do in this most intricate case?”

“Yes, say, say?” cried both sisters.

“I must first beg permission to put some questions to Miss Eleonora,” said Clara.

“Good!” replied Eleonora; “and I promise you to answer them as honestly as I can.”

“Well then, do you love the wooer in question?”

“No—yes—no! I feel no love for him, but the most perfect respect—friendship.”

“Very well. My second question is, does he love you? Is it thoroughly necessary to his happiness that you become his wife?”

“Yes—no—yes! I believe that he really loves me, but I believe also that he might be just as happy with another.”

“Allow me now still a third question. Are you dissatisfied with your present condition? are you displeased with your present sphere?”

“No—yes—no! I cannot say that I am dissatisfied with anything in my present situation. I am as well contented with it as most people who wish to live as long on the earth as God pleases.”

“I get quite angry, Eleonora!” exclaimed Miss Greta impatiently. “How can people know so little what they would have?”

But Clara said with greater seriousness—“This then is my counsel, Miss Eleonora: don’t marry.” And she added—“Ah! the letting alone in this case can do so little harm.”

“Yes, you are certainly right,” sighed Eleonora; “but one would nevertheless benefit some one in the world by one’s life—one would make some one happy.”

“But how can we be certain of achieving this through marriage?” said Clara with tears in her eyes, and with an animation very rare with her. “Is not life full of trial, disquiet, and sorrowful occurrences? Our own life, our own persons, can indeed so very easily become a fountain of trouble for those to whom we unite ourselves. What a wide field for misfortunes of all kinds opens out itself with the plighting of a marriage troth! And the children!—ah! why introduce

more beings into a world where already so many contend with want and misery?"

"One gives them a good education, cultivates a talent in them, and procures them a secure income!" cried Eva and Aurora.

"Can we tell then beforehand whether we shall be able to do all this?" demanded Clara, with an expression which clearly betrayed that she in this respect had suffered painful experience. "There may be that in the character of the parents which may destroy the happiness of the children for ever. Oh! it is dreadful when the child must say to its mother, Why did you give me life? And when we give life to a child, how do we know that we shall be able to watch over its happiness? Perhaps we die early, and leave behind only little, poor orphans. Oh, no! do not marry! it leads only to misfortune and misery. Are there not unfortunates enough already in the world? Is it not foolish to be the means of increasing this number?"

"But one does not die! one has a profitable employment," cried the sisters.

"It may be, it may be!" answered Clara warmly. "We may live; we may be rich; are we therefore sure of happiness and peace? Does a husband always continue the same? Is your husband precisely the person that can make you constantly happy? Do you know what it means—a miserable marriage?" Clara became more and more excited. "Look at the gloomy, wet, cold, foggy day"—she pointed out of the window—"it is like the life of a woman in an unhappy marriage? The sun, the flowers, all that is beautiful and amiable changes before it passes her threshold; all shrouds itself in hoariness; body and soul are benumbed, and every hope grows pale before the ice-breath or the stormy character of a husband. He can play with impunity the tyrant in his own house, and she then is converted into a worm, a serpent, or an angel. To an angel! yes, if she perish in her misery—if she is able to suffer all for—but no! that is too heavy, too bitter! God send her death! Ah, venture on no such hazardous game! Do not marry! do not marry!" Clara's tears ran in streams.

Miss Greta, in wonder at the long speech of Clara, had raised herself in bed. Resting herself on the one fully

restored arm, she gazed at her attentively, and finally exclaimed, "Are you sane? are you actually in earnest to withhold people from marrying? My good child, how then shall the world be in a condition in honourable style to roll on its way? Perhaps you are of opinion that it would be for the best if some fine day it should go down altogether?"

Clara looked as though she did not see any great harm in that; but she only replied, "Let those who really love each other, marry."

"Now God be praised!" said Miss Greta; "there I see at length an escape. But all the others, who have not the luck to be fooled in each other till death?"

"These may help the rest in the management of their households and the education of their children, and in particular hasten to the assistance of those who groan under the weary yoke of this world."

"As I understand the matter," observed Miss Greta dubiously, "these good people shall indefatigably labour for others, and think no further of themselves. But, Clara, what fortune shall then be awarded to the poor wretches of helpers in this world; since it is nevertheless certain by the will of the Lord, that every one shall receive his portion of happiness and joy on earth?"

"I don't know," sighed Clara with tearful eyes. "I believe it was designed that there should be more joy than pain in the world, but it is rather a vale of misery than an abode of happiness; we are here, however, only in a state of probation. All will one day become good and manifest, when this is over. As things now are, it appears to me that she who remains single is always the happiest. She has only to care for herself; she can bear her burden alone, without distressing another with it. She can pass quietly through the world; needs burden no one, neither in conversation nor conduct; she is nowhere fast bound, and can without trouble go out of every one's way. She needs so little for herself, she can give away all that she has; she need please no one except God. What signifies it if we change, wither up, and lose all external charms? We do not depend on the humours of men; we do not wait their nod to withdraw ourselves; we come and go unnoticed and unblamed; a place on which to lay one's head at evening, that we find every-

where. Whether it be a soft pillow or a bundle of straw makes no great difference; we are alone, we have only ourselves to care for, and seek nothing but the way to God."

Clara had spoken without passion, but with deep emotion. Tears stood in Miss Greta's eyes as she continued to gaze on Clara with astonishment. Some words of sincerest feeling lay upon her lips, but she suppressed them; laid herself quietly down, and only said—"It seems then, that though you have permitted marriage to those who really love each other, that you hold even this for half a folly, and are of opinion that it is best to remain unmarried, and to concern oneself with the world as little as possible."

"Yes, it is so," said Clara, and went on sewing with the greatest earnestness.

The three cousins looked in wonder on Clara, on each other, and all opened their mouths to speak, when Miss Greta made a signal with her hand, raised her voice, and spoke thus: "Listen to me, young ladies; and especially you, Clara, listen. I will relate to you a story."

She let Clara arrange her pillows; took a convenient, half-sitting, half-lying position; and began as follows:*

"One day the Virtues became weary of living all together with the Bishop of Skara, and they therefore resolved on making a journey, in order to breathe a little fresh air. As they were about to enter a boat for this purpose, a poor woman with a pale child approached, and implored charity. Pity put her hand immediately into their travelling purse, and pulled out a piece of money: Economy, however, drew back the arm of her companion, and whispered in her ear—'What extravagance! give her a ticket for soup for the poor!'

"Foresight, who constantly carried a number of these tickets about her, after she had made more exact inquiries into the circumstances of the poor woman, consented to give her one of them. Pity, encouraged by a hint from Generosity, pressed secretly the money into the meagre hand. Zeal presented her with a copy of the 'Penny Magazine;'

* They who will open Bulwer's, "Pilgrims of the Rhine" may trace the origin of this story, and judge of the imitations and essential deviations which present themselves in the sense, as well as in the working out and application of it.

and pleased and thankful, though with a glance of indifference at the latter gift, she went away.

“The Virtues now began hastily their voyage; mild winds blew around them, and in edifying conversation on the last sermon of the Bishop, they were borne thence by the dancing waves. Suddenly, however, a black cloud drew itself over the heavens. Foresight, who had bought a new bonnet for the journey, begged that they might go ashore, and seek shelter from the coming tempest. Courage was for defying the danger, but Prudence came to the support of Foresight, and they finally agreed to land. Just then they became aware of a boat which steered directly upon them, and whose passengers were in the highest degree jovial, and made a tremendous noise. It was a little company of Vices to which Good-humour had joined herself, and who now pursued their journey with the greatest delight. In passing by, they gave, purposely as it seemed, such a rude jolt to the boat of the Virtues, that it was very near capsizing. Courage took fire, he seized the strange boat, and was in the act to deal his blows amongst its crew, when Humanity threw herself between, and received on her cheeks the cuffs which the contending parties designed for each other. This pleased Good-humour so exceedingly that with one bound she sprang into the boat of the Virtues, and in doing this, gave such a violent shove to that of the Vices, that it nearly upset, and was borne away. Zeal and Love of Truth prepared to send after the Vices a cargo of insults, but Generosity gave them a sign to be silent; ‘For,’ said she, ‘vice carries its own punishment with it.’

“In the mean time the storm-clouds had disappeared, and they continued their journey amid the most agreeable conversation. The Virtues visited many cities, one after another, and wherever they sojourned they diffused blessings. Trade flourished, men became cheerful, many marriages took place, and people could not comprehend how it happened that all went so gloriously on earth.

“One evening, as the Virtues drank tea in the good city of Jönköping, and ate gingerbread to it, they boasted of their happy influence on mankind. Prudence, enraptured with their beneficent achievements, was just rising to make a sort of royal speech, when her eye accidentally fell on Humility, who

cast on her a dubious glance. A member of the company then, after much exordium, suggested that the Virtues might effect much more good if they did not all keep together; therefore that they should separate, and spread themselves over all quarters of the earth, in order, like the Apostles, to preach reformation to the world. This motion was received by all with the most zealous approbation; though I must remark that Prudence and Moderation were not present; they had withdrawn shortly before the introduction of the motion, in order to replenish the company's stock of sugar and coffee, which were pretty nearly exhausted. When they returned they did not delay putting themselves in opposition to the adopted resolution, but Courage and Zeal bawled so loud that the softer voices were scarcely heard; and as finally Generosity, excited by Zeal, declared herself for the separation, Foresight dared no longer to raise her dove's voice, but bit her nails, was silent, and at length went out to order a new pair of shoes for the journey.

"The next day the Virtues separated, and went each, by herself, alone into the world, after having agreed that day twelvemonths to meet again in Stockholm by the statue of Gustavus Wasa, in the Parliament-house-square, and there to hold a 'plenum' on their own and the nation's affairs.

"Courage blackened his moustaches with *lapis infernalis* and directed his course to the north. On the way he met the knight Don Quixote, who advised him to arouse the ambition of the fair sex, which had so long been suppressed, and to incite them to self-assistance and self-defence.

"This pleased Courage extremely. Whilst the two knights discoursed on the eventful metamorphosis of the hitherto so-called weak sex, they rode past a church out of which issued a marriage train. The new-made bride was an extremely beautiful young lady, who did not seem quite a stranger to Courage, for she nodded kindly to him as she entered the carriage; this pleased Courage so much that he immediately selected her to become the model of her sex, and embraced the very first opportunity of introducing himself to her. What took place in the new household after this interview, is known in all the coffee-houses of the city of X., and they have pronounced their judgments thereupon. It is related that the young lady became immediately after the wedding

as it were metamorphosed, and the husband thereupon nearly mad. Nothing was heard from the mouths of the young couple but angry words and menaces, which speedily proceeded to blows. Finally the wife called out her husband to fight a duel; but upon this she was, on the recommendation of her own sex, clapped into a lunatic asylum, and the affair gave great scandal in the city and country round.

“Foresight chanced in Stockholm to read a long article in a newspaper on this occurrence. Horrified at the mischief which the folly of Courage had occasioned, she reflected on all the dangers and cross-grained accidents to which one is exposed in the world, and determined in her wisdom to withdraw entirely from it, satisfied that the highest good fortune to be attained here is to escape with a whole skin. In consequence of this conclusion she took lodgings with an old unmarried lady, who from fear of thieves inhabited a couple of attics four stories high. Here Foresight might have spent good and quiet days, if she had not been tormented with a thousand fears and fancies of all possible dangers. Out of terror of fire she scarcely trusted herself to cook anything; she was apprehensive of becoming ill for want of fresh air, yet going out was not to be thought of,—she might be run over by the very first carriage; a flower-pot might fall out of a window and kill her; she might break a leg on the steps, etc. No, no! leaving the house was quite impossible; and such was her fear of one day being obliged to go out to purchase a new gown, that she had not the courage to wear her old one, which was already torn in sundry places. At length it came to that pitch that she could neither stir hand nor foot. She had infected her landlady, the old maid, with all her fears and scruples to such a degree that when at length a fire broke out in the house, the two friends dared make no efforts for their escape, and must certainly have perished in the flames, had not a chimney-sweep and a watchman taken them on their backs and brought them out of danger.

“In the mean time Zeal ran about in the world, gossiped, cried, preached, and drove mankind first in one direction and then in another. He tore the peasant from the plough, the mother from her children, and the official from his bureau, to give to each some other employment. Then he ran suddenly off, and left them to take care of themselves. As he turned

himself from Europe towards China, in order to convert the heathen, he came too near to a mine in Russia in the moment of its explosion, was caught by the powder and lost—alas, alas!—both his eyes! Still he ran some time longer about the world, creating naturally nothing but confusion, and came into collision with the police. He was ultimately compelled to provide himself with a guide, who for a certain remuneration led him back to the place whence he had come.

“Humility, it is true, had not passed through such hazardous adventures; yet neither had it gone extraordinarily well with her. Separated from her companions, she cut such a pitiful and lamentable figure that nobody would have anything to do with her. After she had dragged herself, with bowings and curtseyings, through the whole world; after actually crawling on her kness, knocking at all doors, and everywhere saying, ‘I am not worthy to loose the latchet of your shoes,’ and had been everywhere attacked and ill used, she turned herself homewards, and reached Stockholm completely in rags, and nearly dead.

“Here, at the foot of the statue of the hero-king, she saw, one after another, all her early travelling companions arrive. But, great Heaven! how changed were they! They could scarcely be recognised. Zeal had lost his fiery eyes, and was lame of the right leg. Courage carried an arm in a sling, and had in the highest degree the look of a *mauvais sujet*. Mildness was covered from head to foot with sores and blue weals; on her formerly angelically soft brow angry passion had seated itself, and every third word was a curse. Generosity had all the air of a comedian; he declaimed and ranted incessantly. Patience and Pity were become so thin and transparent, that they could not be seen without the deepest compassion. Good-humour was anything but sober. Prudence found herself in better case; but she was become haughty and boastful; she measured with an air of deep thought her steps and words; took snuff every minute, carried her head aloft, cast looks at her companions over her shoulder, turned up her nose, and was unbearable.

“It may be imagined whether, under such reversed circumstances, the meeting again of the Virtues was a pleasant one. To confess the truth, they resembled, in their present assembly, the Vices far more than the Virtues. But scarcely

were they all together again, had recognised each other, and shaken hands, than their appearance began to change, and every Virtue to acquire its former character. Prudence took from her travelling medicine-chest an ointment, rubbed therewith the darkened eyes of Zeal, which speedily opened themselves, beaming with their former fires. Good-humour was so struck with the dry, ghostlike appearance of Humility, that she became sober on the spot; and the Virtues resolved to strengthen themselves in the next hotel with a banquet and a bowl of punch: there should every one relate his travelling adventures, and take a resolution for the future. 'Bravo!' exclaimed Courage, and gave Foresight the hand; Good-humour took Humility under the arm and led the way, the rest all cheerfully following.

"It would be leading us too far to repeat all the adventures with which the Virtues entertained each other over the bowl. Suffice it to state the resolve which at the end of the sitting was unanimously adopted by all present; which was, that from this time forward the Virtues should always travel together, and should separate as seldom as possible, since they found that each left to herself, without the counsel and support of the rest, only played the fool. With this resolution all the Virtues were highly satisfied. They concluded the feast with a song which Good-humour improvised, and which they stiled the 'League of the Virtues.' As I no longer, however, recollect perfectly the verses of which it consisted, and have no desire by mangling them to convert good-humour into ill-humour, I here close my relation, leaving to my hearers the application of it."

The young ladies were enchanted by the story, yet would put questions and seek explanations; but Miss Greta did not go at all into them, but only begged her young friends to digest the matter each according to her ability.

Eva and Aurora soon rose to take leave. Eleonora followed them, after she had requested permission of Clara to come again, to speak with her further on marriage. Miss Greta claimed for herself the right to be present, and that as advocate for the lover. Eleonora, smiling and sighing, agreed; yet on her way home the question of marrying went on in her mind with a yes, then a no, then a yes, and then a no again. Aurora and Eva were deeply engaged in projects of purchas-

ing for themselves elegant dresses for the next representation at the amateur theatre for the benefit of those who had suffered in the town of W.

Miss Greta, who now associated in her thoughts the tulle-devouring lover with Clara's horror of marriage, said to her with great seriousness—"Clara, either you are an extraordinary creature, or you are proceeding on a most perilous path."

Clara was silent; and Miss Greta continued—"Your repugnance to marriage is not natural. I can very well conceive that people do not enter it with so light a heart as they enter a ball-room; but your repugnance, and the views which you entertain of life generally, are equally unchristian and opposed to nature. Man is not made to be alone. I cannot indeed exactly say that it would be agreeable to me to be regarded by you as a person fit for a madhouse if I should take it into my head to marry, which might yet very well come to pass without my being quite befooled with my chosen one."

"And if you do some time marry under such circumstances, I will not therefore call it foolish; since no one seems to me so calculated as you to make a husband happy. You are accompanied through life by good-fortune and cheerfulness, which communicate themselves to all that surround you."

"It rejoices me, Clara, that you think so of me," said Miss Greta, pressing her hand.

"But if you knew," continued Clara, "what it is to suffer want, to hunger—if you knew how many there are in the world who daily starve—you would certainly not marry, but remain single, in order to be able to assist the suffering, and to feed the hungry."

"My best Clara," said Miss Greta, with her well-known arch smile, "I am certain that if I followed your counsel, that his Holiness the Pope would one day, on that very account, canonize me, and that I should be worshipped as St. Margaret; but that I should thereby effect any good, I do not believe; on the contrary, I fear that I should only increase the number of the giddy and good-for-nothing. As to what concerns "works of mercy," I have on that head my own notions. I hold *ennui* to be the greatest evil, yawning the greatest pest; and those who know how to drive these

away by innocent amusement to be the greatest benefactors of mankind. A hearty laugh is worth more than ducats."

"That is true," replied Clara; "but *ennui* is a self-induced evil, and they who have cause to yawn might have cause also to be merry, if they were wise; but——"

"Well!—but!——"

"But with the sufferers of whom I speak it is different. The deepest misery oppresses them. If they *would* raise themselves, they cannot do it; want and sickness weigh like a stupendous burden on soul and body. The unhappy moulder away in the living body."

"This happens indeed to many of the rich also," said Miss Greta: "I think it is the fault of people themselves when they fall into trouble. Honourable and orderly people always are able to help themselves. Besides this, it is very difficult to dispense alms properly, and the unworthy receive them generally far oftener than the actually suffering."

"It may possibly have its difficulties," replied Clara; "when, however, we shun not the labour, and do not begrudge the time, these are easily surmounted. Do not say, that every one is able to help himself. Ah! there are such inevitable misfortunes, there is such unconquerable misery. One may even regard the failings of men as misfortunes, which it is difficult to avoid. We talk often of the love of pleasure, and of the intemperance of the poor. Ah! if you knew how sparingly pleasure is scattered on their path of life! And if life falls heavy upon them, and in a weak moment they are not able to resist the allurements of pleasure,—if they sometimes enjoy a fleeting hour, shall they then do penance for it for their whole life? Are they then no longer worthy of help and improvement? Shall that be punished in them as a crime, which in the wealthy is at worst termed a pardonable weakness? O, if you knew how many of these faults have their origin in want, in the privation of enjoyment! The poor need enjoyment just as much as bread. Joy is the fresh air which makes man breathe more freely—so that he is glad of life, that he believes in God."

Clara's tears flowed so abundantly that she could no longer speak. Miss Greta was silent; but Clara's words opened to her the view of a side of life which she had hitherto passed over unnoticed. She cast a long gaze over scenes which till

now had wholly escaped her eyes, and her heart felt itself oppressed. What was the consequence of this, I do not say; it was too simple, too holy, to be trumpeted abroad. If, however, my fair readers suppose that Miss Greta appointed her friend her treasurer, and that Clara therefore shed tears of warm joy, I will so far confess that they are in the main not far wrong.

And thou, stern judge of merit, and abhorrer of alms, shake not thy head over it. Invest thy money in manufactories, in railways, in what thou wilt; but leave Clara alone. Fear nothing! she will certainly not give her silk gown to a poor woman; her money to a drunkard; she certainly will not, like a certain amiable young Countess, fling her Turkish slippers to a little barefoot chimney-sweeper. She will conduct the poor child into the school, give work to the unemployed, procure medicine for the sick, and deal out alms discreetly. Is that not putting out her capital to interest? And should this merely at times produce one bright moment amid a gloomy existence, one little alleviation of incurable pains, then——

Ah! let the wise ones order the world as they may, there will always remain room in it for misfortune, for unmerited suffering; and there will therefore never be wanting a stimulant to the activity of the Sisters of Charity.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONVERSATION IN THE EVENING TWILIGHT.

This is needful, that the right
 Ever fearlessly be done,—
 Then be victory ours, or flight,
 It remaineth—all as one.

GELJER.

THE day of Edla's departure was fixed and at hand. Nina alone knew nothing of it, and believed the hour of separation yet far distant. Edla desired to spare to the sensitive mind of her sister the pain of bidding farewell; she saw therefore very gladly, that, as the winter weather was so mild and fine, the Countess accepted an invitation to a neighbouring seat, where it was the wish to do honour, with great festivity, to the new year, the new-married pair, and his Excellency's lovely daughter. Edla observed how the Countess took all pos-

sible pains to keep them more and more apart, and how she sought to prevent every cordial advance, especially in the few days before departure, when the souls of severing friends are wont involuntarily to overflow with love and confidence. Edla saw the purpose of the Countess, but she disdained any attempt to defeat it. To wish now to hold back Nina, to occasion her tears instead of joy, Edla would have rejected as a piece of unwarrantable egotism. With a sorrow which was not without its sweetness, Edla thought, "She shall be cheerful; she shall sport and laugh, while I forsake the paternal home; she shall not see that I suffer. The clouds shall fly rapidly across the heaven of her joy."

The Countess, at parting, was ice-cold towards Edla. "A pleasant journey," said she, with indifference. "I have given orders that everything that you require shall be made ready for your journey."

"I thank you! I have already prepared all myself," answered Edla as coldly. "Farewell, my father!—My father!"—her voice faltered.

"I shall see you again before you go," said the President, as he drew on with a great bustle and much noise his overshoes, in order to hide his starting tears.

Now came Nina. She was wonderfully beautiful in the splendid winter dress; in the princely ermine. Edla combated with the most violent emotion. As she met Nina's tearful eyes, her inquiring glance; as she felt her tremble in her embrace, and heard her repeat with evident anxiety, "I shall see thee soon, very soon again!"—Edla congratulated herself on having been enabled to spare the tender feelings of her sister, and to make her departure as easy as possible. She calmed Nina, and saw with a cloudless brow her family set forth.

The next day Edla was busied with her own affairs. She wrote a long letter to Nina, full of kindness and good sense. The evening of the last day arrived. Edla had taken leave of Miss Greta, who was not in the least deceived as to what went on in the house and in Edla's mind; and testified towards her the most cordial esteem. In Miss Greta, Edla embraced a sincere admirer, and went thence down into the sitting-room, where, before the comfortable fire, silent and composedly she awaited the farewell visit of Count Ludwig.

Twilight and snow-drifts, a fire in the chimney, and deep silence in a lonely room, are the most auspicious spirits of confidence. In the hour of twilight, Mystery, that child afraid of the light, steps forth from its hiding-place; then wheel the bats here and there, the owls utter their ominous cry, "Come with us! come with us!" The fear of spectres announces itself amid its shudderings and terrors. But then also nobler apparitions of the hidden world come forth from the depths of the human heart. How gladly does Reconciliation kindle her beaming star in the glow of the descending sun! How lovingly and refreshingly descend the dews of Consolation! I will not speak of declarations of love; between the twilight and the fire they skip forth involuntarily, and are all the lighter the more they resemble will-o'-the-wisps. The Christ-child, too, appears at this hour. In a word, it is remarkable how, in the gossiping hour of twilight, everything comes to the daylight.

It is also remarkable how *mal-à-propos* this impromptu is here brought in, and how little it agrees with the present moment in the twilight by the fireside. Here sit Edla and Count Ludwig in the easy chairs, silent as statues, and gaze with thoughtful looks into the burning embers, as they sink down into charcoal and ashes. Friendly reader, your pardon! Perhaps you will kindly recollect that you have already heard prefaces that did not, by any means, agree with that which came after.

At length Count Ludwig broke silence, and said to Edla, with an expression of deep dissatisfaction: "You depart, you withdraw yourself for a long time, and leave me behind in the most painful uncertainty. You will not allow that I express either to Nina or her father a wish which you yourself at the same time approve. How long is this restraint to continue? How long am I to appear to your parents—to the world—yes, to Nina herself—in a dubious light?"

"Not to Nina!" interrupted Edla. "She knows of your love—she knows on what account you delay your declaration."

"Good!"

"She is grateful for your kindness; grateful that you do not just yet require from her so important a decision; for which she considers herself still too young and inexperienced.

She fears at present any change of her condition ; she is not yet sufficiently prepared for it. She knows my anxiety on account of her health, on account of the tenderness of her soul. I believe that she must not marry till her health is more confirmed, till she is altogether better acquainted with the world, in which she must take her place as your wife. She now makes her first acquaintance with social life, let her move undisturbed in it—she is yet very young. By this you will be able to be near her, and to endeavour to win——”

“Win what?” asked Count Ludwig sharply.

“Her heart! How sincerely do I desire that this should become yours. I will not conceal it from you. Nina esteems, but she does not love you.”

“I know it,” answered Count Ludwig coldly.

Edla looked at him inquiringly and surprised.

With a tone of considerable emotion Count Ludwig continued—“Wonder not if he who from the cradle learned to do without tenderness ; who, the only time that he thought himself beloved, found himself deceived ; wonder not if his glance is become penetrative of the feelings of others, and if he be no longer liable to delusions on that head. I know it—I am not beloved : it is no easy thing to love me ; and indeed, I do not much require it. Who does not succeed in being beloved ? Who cannot inspire passion, especially in women ? Forgive me, Edla ; but you, less than any one, cannot be blind to the weakness of your sex. A little singer, whose whole merit consists in a well-executed air—a good waltzer—a bravura or bravado—a neat exterior—an agreeable temper—all this appears amiable, and can awaken love. I cannot do that. I have quite made up my mind on this subject ; I look for no exception in Nina. Yes ; I am even prepared to know that she can love another—that one of those small men whom I despise——”

“Count Ludwig!” interrupted Edla with astonishment ; “do I hear aright?”

“Yes ; but hear me to the end ! That sweet, that bewitching feeling I cannot awaken, cannot expect it ; neither can Nina feel it for me, but she may learn perhaps something of it from others. That is natural ; it signifies nothing to me, and I can lose nothing thereby. I will deserve that which is better, will win that which is more important—Nina’s perfect esteem, her perfect confidence, and truest

friendship. In the best and deepest meaning of the word, Nina will be mine. What I love in Nina is not her beauty, not her fascination of manner, not the accomplishment which as Edla's pupil she possesses; but it is the woman—the woman *par excellence*—the kind, sweet, unassuming woman. I am stern and hard—I know it. Only through a character, only through a mind like hers, can I become milder and happier; can I indeed become happy. Nina is the pupil of Edla; she will learn to value that good which I have in me, and will also by her angel gentleness make me more human. She will see in me her best friend, her conductor; she will love her children, her house, her influence over myself. Believe me, she will be happy!”

“I fear,” said Edla with a deep sigh, “that you misunderstand the peculiar nature of love. Perhaps we call the same thing only by other names. Friendship and confidence constitute certainly the most real core of love. But if you would acquire the friendship and confidence of Nina, pardon me if I say that you must not exert alone the stern virtues. Confidence, especially, is a bashful child; we must seek to win it by kindness, by goodwill. Flowers open only to the genial rays of the sun. If you will win the love of my sister, you must be kind and gentle towards her. Oh! you do not know how sensitive she is—how she needs tenderness as well as strength. Be affectionate to her, Count Ludwig, or you will not win her. Be gentle and tender——”

“Edla!” interrupted Count Ludwig, “ask not from the oak, that it should stoop itself to the tender flowers; accustom rather the flowers to wind themselves round its firm stem.”

“Not so, Count Ludwig!” said Edla, “your comparisons halt, and the relation between man and woman is not and should not be regarded so one-sidedly. My flower requires a tender treatment, otherwise she is not for you. Be kind to Nina, Count Ludwig, I repeat it once more! Be affectionate, or you will not succeed with her. Learn to value what is so beautiful in her; her angelic goodness, her heavenly disposition, learn to value this; abuse it not; exercise no harshness towards it. How easily is Nina cast down! How easy were it for a hard hand to destroy her whole life! How often have I blamed myself for my own severity, which yet was only called forth by the deepest tenderness! How often has her

angelic soul made me melt in spite of myself! Remember, Count Ludwig, how she suffered as a child from the tooth-ache, and when the surgeon had drawn her a sound instead of the decayed tooth, remember how she bore the continued pain as long as the surgeon remained present, and then begged me not to mention it to him, as it might be unpleasant to him. This is only a trifle; but numbers of such traits stand as lovely stars in the heaven of gentleness and amiability which expands itself above Nina's whole life. She was thus as a child, she is thus still. Tell me, Count Ludwig, deserves not such a heart that it should be spared, that we should seek to win it by kindness and tenderness?"

Tears stood in Edla's eyes. Count Ludwig also was affected, as he replied, "Give me this angel to wife! Let me be daily, hourly, beneath her influence: then shall I perhaps become what you wish, what Nina requires. Yes! perhaps it will enable me to become amiable—at least to her." A smile which made him infinitely handsome, passed over his countenance. "And this," continued he, "would enable me so much the more easily to contemn the judgment of the multitude, for these will always regard me as a pitiless egotist, as a hard, proud, heartless man. On that score I am easily comforted; yes, it even flatters my self-love to be so judged, and the more so if in the future—should I myself not live to witness this—my native land shall flourish through improvements to which I have contributed; already do I bless those who in a thoughtless manner endeavoured to degrade my name. See, Edla, this is the honour, the reward, which I seek, and which I know how to win. If in aspirations after the actual, the enduring, I handle sometimes the superficial somewhat rudely, terrify a dovelike nature, or wholly pull down half-decayed fabrics,—yes, if in pressing, important demands, sometimes forget sufficiently to spare; let not Edla therefore condemn, let not Nina therefore fear me."

"Count Ludwig!" said Edla, "I honour most highly the purity of your intentions, the firmness of your character; I fear only your extreme manner of thinking. More mildness, more philanthropy, more respect for personal feeling, if I may say so, would render your whole activity still more beneficent."

"Give me Nina to wife!" cried Count Ludwig with

warmth; "make her my good angel, and the hardness of my nature will melt. If she walk by my side, I shall become less stern. She has a talisman in her hand, which can exert great power over my soul. Let her use it; let me daily, hourly, hear her voice, see her sweet countenance, then—but not till then, Edla—expect too much from me, not even for her. I will every day venture my life for her; but to be gentle, tender, amiable with her, to play the Celadon amid the throng that always are about her, that do not hope; do not require it, Edla! I should only make myself ridiculous. And I must repeat it, that I set no value on that which merely pleases, on the so-called amiable, not even on what is called goodness. This is an ambiguous quality, which assumes the most miserable weakness for its shield. I have only too well experienced that the greatest amiability may be united with the deepest depravity of heart. I think you once saw Edward D. with me,—tell me what impression he made upon you?"

"I acknowledge," replied Edla, "that he struck me as extremely amiable; and that the soul which spoke through his features, seemed utterly incapable of the crime which he committed."

"You only saw him," continued Count Ludwig, smiling bitterly; but what was that to his conversation, to daily intercourse with him? He would have won over his bitterest enemy. I loved him," continued Count Ludwig with an expression of unusual feeling; "never have I so loved any one, never so wholly and sincerely confided in any one! And he deceived me! He brought death and dishonour to my very heart! Certainly, I should at that time have become a misanthrope; I should have steeled my bosom for ever against every better feeling, had it not been for you, Edla! With manly strength, with womanly gentleness, you again restored my soul to fortitude, and healed the wounds of my heart."

Edla turned away her face, on which deep emotion was visible. "Have I really been able to do that, Count Ludwig?" demanded she with a voice which was choked with tears.

"Healed," continued Count Ludwig, as if conversing with himself—"healed is too much to say. These wounds

heal never. There are moments in which it seems to me as if his blood could be the only balsam. The wounds healed not, but you have alleviated their burning pain. Edla and Nina have reconducted me to humanity."

After a short silence he proceeded painfully. "We met as boys at the academy. He surpassed me in everything. That annoyed me. I would always be the first. I began to hate him. Then he fought and bled for me, in a most unequal contest into which I had fallen. My hate now changed itself into love. He returned it, at least as I believed. He had patience with me and my caprice. He made me every day better, he was so amiable. And he was proud with all his gentleness; he permitted no protection; he accepted not the smallest support. This vexed and charmed me at the same time. He seemed to be the best, the most distinguished of men. I relied upon him more than upon the whole world; yes, more than on myself. He had a power over me which no one had besides——"

Count Ludwig was silent, as overpowered by his feelings; then went on, while a mild paleness clothed his features. "The serpent had a too seductive-tongue, as the Bible says. How do I disdain this amiability, behind which so much crime, so much depravity can be concealed! The deceiver! the seducer! how I hate him! I know not whither he is gone; but I regret that I have not branded him before the world, so that he could no more deceive, no more seduce! Edla! if you ever meet him on this earth, trust not your sagacity—trust not the abhorrence with which his crimes have filled you—flee him! flee him! His amiability, his apparent excellence, his heavenly-speaking eyes, would misguide you! Do not see him! do not hear him! His tongue is false as seducing. He could win over the purest being. Flee him! Has he not dishonoured, murdered the sister of his friend?—and goes about in the world unpunished; perhaps beloved, perhaps honoured——in order to make yet many more unhappy victims! Why have I spared him? But Thou, Heaven! wilt punish him—Thou, the just Avenger! wilt consign him——"

"Ludwig, cease!" exclaimed Edla with sternness and dignity.

Count Ludwig was suddenly silent, but he was beside

himself, rage made his pale lips tremble, and his eyes flash forth flames of hatred. It was long before he became fully himself again. He then sighed deeply, and said—"Pardon me!"

"These outbreaks, Count Ludwig, are unworthy of you," said Edla. "How much would they disturb Nina's peace!"

"She shall never witness them. I will become more worthy of you and your sister." Count Ludwig pressed Edla's hand to his lips, and hastily withdrew.

Edla remained behind with excited feelings. Her wishes, her thoughts, compared Ludwig and Nina; and there came continually over her mind, a doubt, a pain, which softly whispered the question—"Will he make her happy?" But she rejected this question as a spectre of her imagination.

Perhaps it may seem to my fair readers inconsistent that Edla should so warmly have favoured the suit of Count Ludwig; inconsistent with her clear sense that she did not perceive how unfitting must be such a character for the gentle, love-requiring Nina. I would willingly defend her against this charge, and therefore we will examine the matter closer.

There existed a similarity between Edla and Count Ludwig which drew them involuntarily to each other. Both in their childhood and youth had been treated with neglect; both were by nature denied the early faculty of winning the hearts of men, and of finding pleasure in intercourse with others. Both had a pure, moral, and upright character: although Count Ludwig, in consequence of inborn pride and bitter experience, had acquired a stern hardness; Edla, on the contrary, had embodied in herself all the more strength and a forgiving gentleness. Count Ludwig's stern virtue had excited Edla's admiration; his unhappy history had called forth her sincerest sympathy: admiration and sympathy beget love, and this feeling threw a veil over all the failings of Count Ludwig. Edla would willingly have sacrificed her life for his happiness; but so humbly did she deem of herself that the thought never occurred to her for a moment of making him happy. But Nina! Count Ludwig loved her; and the maternal tenderness which more and more developed itself in her heart for Nina, became at length stronger than her feelings for Count Ludwig. There lay an infinite happiness for her in the thought of con-

signing her Nina to the most honoured and most beloved man in the world. If a fear sometimes fell upon her that Count Ludwig could not make her sister perfectly happy, this in turn was expelled by the doubt that probably Nina was not fully worthy of the Count. These doubts were again constantly reconciled by the internal conviction that the two beloved beings would certainly perfect each other; and Edla saw therein, not only her own happiness, but her heart beat warmly in the beautiful hope that out of this union would spring much good for others. So felt and thought Edla. Do you yet understand or not?

We will now seek Edla again at the fireside.

The last ember was extinguished, and Edla returned to her bedchamber. Here she found all prepared for the journey, and an indescribable weight fell upon her heart. She felt like a stranger in her father's house. It was only by the compulsion of circumstances that she abandoned these rooms, in which she had been the quiet, ruling spirit, in which formerly she had been beloved and cherished. Now she was solitary, forsaken, and shunned,—and all without fault of hers! The atmosphere of the room, the aspect of the furniture, especially that belonging to her sister, a little shawl which she had carelessly flung over an easy chair,—all awoke in Edla's heart the feeling of unspeakable sadness. An angry bitterness rose in her soul against her who had occasioned all these painful changes; but such a feeling was to her intolerable, and she resisted and combated it earnestly. With what weapon? He who had seen Edla pale, sorrowful, and speechless, seated on her travelling trunk, would not probably have believed that she at that moment fought out a fight more severe, and achieved a victory more glorious, than ever did Napoleon. With what weapons? Call them heavenly, my dear reader,—thou knowest them as well as I.

Edla had parted with unusual coldness from her step-mother. She resolved to write some lines to her, in order to leave behind her a more friendly impression, and to urge more earnestly on her mind care for Nina's health. As she approached her writing-desk, her eyes fell on a casket of red morocco, which appeared to be placed with such a degree of care that it should not be overlooked. She opened it, and found a costly necklace of genuine pearls, and with it these

words in the hand of her father—"To the best of daughters from her loving father. Very early in the morning I shall be with thee."

Now first flowed tears down Edla's cheeks; but they were sweet, salutary tears. She felt that her father understood her, secretly thanked her, and all became light and bright about her. The parting had lost its bitterness, and how willingly now did she obey the divine command—"Thou shalt bless even thy enemies!"

Edla travelled away with a heart which had beaten warmly in the paternal embrace. There came in no one to talk over her journey, nor to assign reasons and suppositions for it; so well and quietly had she ordered this matter. Deep and powerful souls adjust everything in silence, and make no noise with their doings and with themselves. They go on their way like the works of God. In deep silence the sun ascends the heaven; silently sinks the night down upon the earth. What prepares itself in greater stillness than the re-awaking of nature, and what is more glorious than the spring?

CHAPTER XVII.

SECRETS.

Thou shalt tell it to neither friend nor foe.

JESUS SIRACH.

Two months were now flown since the fresco-painting of the little Filius, and since Miss Greta's accident. The broken arm could already tolerably perform again its office, and Miss Greta might very soon quit her sick-chamber; but, to say the truth, she cared very little about it. She had become acquainted with a happiness that was of more value to her than all the attractions of her former life. Ah! it is when the heart cleaves to another that life first becomes rich, and the spirit is satisfied.

Between Miss Greta and Clara an affectionate relationship had sprung up—they knew not themselves how—which however made them both thoroughly happy. They had neither imparted to the other their own concerns, nor related the romance of their lives, nor had sighed forth the Oh! and Ah! of the heart; and yet they knew each other sufficiently; yet cherished they a mutual confidence, which only waited the

occasion by-and-by to convert itself into the most genuine friendship. Perhaps a tender friend will find this expression too weak and far-fetched; I, for my part, know no stronger and better.

Miss Greta was already carrying in head and heart a plan which was not yet fully matured, when one evening the Countess hastily entered her room, and exclaimed in great excitement: "Well! what do you say now?"

"What should I say?" replied Miss Greta merrily; "I say first good evening, and then, like Clara, be seated, and let us be quiet."

"Yes, but it is precisely Clara who gives us occasion not to be this," continued the Countess. "Margaret! your Clara is a worthless, hypocritical person, who does not deserve the kindness which you bestow upon her. She is a serpent which you have warmed in your bosom!"

"Well, well, what is it then?" demanded Miss Greta seriously, but quietly.

"She has not kept her promise; she is to-day again for the third time gone out secretly."

"Well," replied Miss Greta, endeavouring vainly to conceal her vexation; "we need not on that account cry fire and murder! She has probably gone out to breathe a little fresh air, she has been quite too much confined for my sake."

"Very good! But must she in the fresh air enjoy the company of a young man? I have had her watched. Rosalie has procured intelligence of the house to which she goes. These visits have certainly been made frequently."

Miss Greta turned pale, for the tulle-devourer stood vividly before her eyes. After a short pause she asked: "And who is he? what is he? where does he live?"

The Countess named the house, but could only give confused information regarding the person in question. "They say," related she, "that he has committed some crime, coined false money, or something of the kind; that he hides from the police, and lives in the extremest poverty—in a word, a most scandalous story."

"Poverty?" interrupted Miss Greta.

"Yes," continued the Countess, "and it is only all too probable that Clara supports him—not that I will criminate her—but her conduct gives ground enough for the worst sus-

picious. The obstinate refusal to give any explanation regarding her promenades testifies how unworthy the object of them must be. To me her whole proceeding appears so degrading, so disgusting, that I desire that at the first possible moment to see her quit my house. Since neither kindness or severity influence her, she must already be a thoroughly abandoned creature!"

"That I strongly doubt," said Miss Greta.

"I wish it may be otherwise," replied the Countess, "but it is scarcely to be hoped. Abandon Clara I will not, but I can no longer suffer her to remain in my house. The domestics are already aware of the circumstance; and I dare not take upon myself the appearance of sanctioning such conduct. Clara must be placed under stricter surveillance. I will for the present put her under the care of Mrs. F."

"Of the soldier's wife? Well selected! and when will you send her off?"

"Without delay. In the morning if it be possible. I confess that the daily sight of such ingratitude and meanness is intolerable to me. Besides this, her conduct demands speedy measures. I have already informed her brothers of it."

"Have you really done so?" interrupted Miss Greta warmly. "You have communicated to her brothers these dark suspicions?"

"I have done it," answered the Countess, "that in the first place they may know what they are to think of their sister; and in the next place, to justify my own behaviour towards her. They made a call just as Rosalie had communicated to me her discoveries. In my first exasperation I poured out my complaints against her, and trust moreover that their severity will better restrain the disobedient girl than my warnings could. She does not deserve to be further spared."

"You have acted precipitately and unkindly, Natalie!" said Miss Greta, much displeased. "Why did you not first speak with me about it, and in concert with me first consider what was to be done? Who knows but that Clara will come clear out of all these suspicions? What then did the brothers say?"

"Oh, they were beside themselves; they were quite desperate, the poor fellows! at last they begged me to act in this affair entirely according to my own pleasure."

"That is more than I could have done in their place! I cannot approve what you have done; and can as little give my consent to what you propose."

"Margaret!" exclaimed the Countess with pride and emphasis, "to my oversight and my protection was Clara consigned."

"I have nothing to say against that, Natalie," replied Miss Greta somewhat shortly. "The only thing which I beseech of you is not to speak further with Clara this evening; not to allow the brothers to see her; and the moment she returns to send her up to me."

The Countess was obliged to promise this; and as a message came now from the President to apprise her that the carriage had already been waiting half-an-hour, and that he himself was waiting to accompany her to the royal entertainment, the Countess left Miss Greta to her own reflections.

Miss Greta sate long silently in the dark, and wept. When she was calmer, and her thoughts had regained their accustomed clearness, she rang the bell, ordered the lamp to be brought, and in her sofa-corner awaited Clara's return with that composure which a fixed and firm resolve can give.

Clara came. Her step was lighter, the expression of her countenance more cheerful, than usual; and her voice alone betrayed some haste and uneasiness as she inquired how Miss Greta found herself. Struck with the unexpected short answer, Clara went directly up to her friend, looked her true-heartedly in the eyes, and asked tenderly: "Are you not well? do you want anything?"

Her look and tone gave Miss Greta pain. She turned herself away, and said shortly and sternly—"Clara, you have broken your promise; you have again gone out alone, and that in the evening."

Clara was silent. Miss Greta had not the courage to look at her, and went on—"You have been followed; you have been with a young man."

Clara was silent. Miss Greta looked at her. She was pale, and leaned her hand on the table, as if seeking to collect herself. A long silence followed.

"Clara!" at length exclaimed Miss Greta, with a tone

which revealed her inward trouble—"Clara! have you then nothing to say?"

Clara's pale lips murmured a soft but distinct "No!"

"Then," said Miss Greta, seriously but dejectedly—"then, Clara, I must tell you what fate awaits you, and what consequences your behaviour and your obstinacy draw after them. The Countess, justly incensed at your ingratitude, has informed your brothers of what has occurred and of her suspicions. In the morning you must leave the house—leave it with disgrace, for the domestics know of your wanderings; they will not cease to relate them to every one who is ready to listen. Your character is lost!"

Deathly pale but composed, Clara answered with a choked voice—"That has happened to many an innocent person! God sees it! on him must I rely!"

"Speak not so, Clara!" cried Miss Greta warmly; "misuse not the name of God. I cannot bear to hear people talking of innocence, where the proceedings testify to the contrary. I do not believe in circumstances which are so unfortunately entangled that individuals cannot avoid appearing to their fellow-creatures as guilty; I do not understand how people can involve themselves in secret practices, and then call on the name of God to testify to the innocence of these practices. Have you not read in the Scriptures that good deeds do not shun the light? Such mysteries and such circumstances we find in romances——"

"Only in romances?" interrupted Clara with a sorrowful smile.

"Yes, only in romances," continued Miss Greta with unceasing zeal. "To them belong intrigues and secret promenades; in them people conceal their doings from sympathizing friends. In actual life, Clara, people help themselves with somewhat sounder reason and an honourable confession. I ask you yet once more, Clara, will you confide in me? Clara, I beseech, I implore you, confide in me!"

"I cannot; it is impossible!" exclaimed Clara, combating with her tears.

"Clara," said Miss Greta, "I will not hear that! It is human to err, but one must not be stupid; that is not human, since man is endowed with reason. Your behaviour at this moment is wholly irrational, and your obstinacy now

sets the only person against you that could or would save you."

"I cannot help it," answered Clara; "it cannot be otherwise."

"You are intolerable!" cried Miss Greta, but collected herself again, and proceeded very seriously. "Do not be too hasty. Reflect on the consequences! It may be hard to confess a transgression, but it is still harder to pass a whole life in poverty and contempt. Recollect, Clara! the Countess may be softened; your future yet rescued—your failings shall be forgiven, but on one only condition—CONFESS!"

"I cannot! I will not!" said Clara with a firm tone. "My life is pure, but I cannot lay open my motives to the day."

"One moment more!" exclaimed Miss Greta with icy determination, "and then I abandon all further concern with you. Your brothers are informed of your proceedings. You have to expect their reproaches, perhaps their persecutions; the Countess expels——"

"I shall know how to withdraw myself from them!" interposed Clara somewhat excited, and made a movement as if to go out. Miss Greta laid her hand on her arm, and said, as she looked keenly and inquisitively into her eyes, "run off, perhaps? Stroll about the country with your lover, and act traged——"

"No! no! no!" cried Clara vehemently.

"Choose the better part, Clara!" continued Miss Greta with cold seriousness. "I will save you; I will do everything for you; I demand, I implore, only CONFIDENCE. You can choose between my protection and public disgrace. Decide!"

"I have decided," answered with a low voice the death-pale Clara; "I am innocent—but I cannot, I will not prove it!"

"Go then!" exclaimed Miss Greta angrily, "go! I believe not your innocence, and will do nothing for you. In the morning you will be expelled from the house with shame!"

"I will not wait for it!" said Clara with so faint a voice that Miss Greta's fine ear could scarcely catch it. Clara approached the door, but in the moment in which she laid her hand upon the lock, she felt herself seized by two arms,

and held back. It was Miss Greta, who reconducted her almost by force to the sofa, seated herself by her side, embraced her affectionately, while she addressed her in a tone which one must have heard in order to understand its effect.

“Are you mad? Do you think that I spoke seriously? Do you believe that I could forsake you? Listen, child! These arms which now embrace you, you have healed and reinvigorated. They will therefore embrace you your life long! Do not think that I shall let you go;—you may be as contrary as you will. Hear, Clara! my poor child, you have done wrong; you have been foolish; fear not, I will help you if it be possible; I will turn all to your good. I am rich, and no one to care for; you shall be my child. Poor girl!” continued she, while she pressed Clara affectionately to her heart, “you have been imprudent, have acted with a high hand; but that anything bad is concealed behind it, I cannot and will not believe. Fear nothing; trust to me; we will set all right again. I should hate myself if I could believe anything bad, anything blameable of you. I will take all upon myself, and bring all again into the right course. And you shall assign to me the right to do it: hear you, Clara? you SHALL! For from this time forward you belong to me, and I shall exercise a merciless tyranny over you. You shall come to me, and share my house, my table, all that I have. You shall tell me your wishes, that I may fulfil them; impart to me your cares, that I may dissipate them. Will you do that, Clara? Will you be my child?”

Clara could not answer; Miss Greta saw it, and held the trembling girl fast pressed to her bosom. “Hear, child!” she continued, in order to give her time to collect herself, “I do not desire that you should love me entirely on that account; don’t trouble yourself about that; but I defy you not to love me, when once I take your fate in my hand. I demand now no friendship, only a degree of confidence, some sound sense, and a little more obedience. You really owe me some acquiescence, for I assure you that you have made me quite ill with your secrets, and the lover who devours tulle and necklaces as another man eats fieldfares; and it would be much worse with me, if I could believe of you still more unnatural things. You may believe that all this has gone sufficiently into my arms to delay very considerably my re-

covery. In all this it requires only a word from you to put me in a position to combat successfully not only against your lover and patroness, but also against your own folly. And I tell you, I intend to do it without this word; yes! you may allow it or not, I have resolved once for all no more to set you at liberty, but to consider all that belongs to you as my affair. You may do as you will, you are henceforth my incomprehensible, beloved child!"

Clara had at first become speechless with astonishment and wonder; but at these words, at this tone of the most cordial kindness, at the certainty of possessing a real friend, her soul dissolved itself in a feeling of ineffable joy, but at the same time of infinite sadness. She laid her head on Miss Greta's shoulder, and gave free course to her tears. After she was somewhat more composed, Miss Greta said with a tender expression, "Give me, however, your promise not to run away from me, since I feel that my arms are yet too weak to detain you."

"I promise it!" answered Clara with tears.

"Good! and yet one more question. Whither do you think of going? What are you intending to do?"

"To go away—far, far away—into service——"

"Into service!—with the lover—or with your husband?"

"No, no! I have neither."

"Dear Clara! do I deserve to be thus put off?"

"And will you, cannot you believe my word? Then you do not really esteem me!" cried Clara warmly, as she arose.

"Well, well, only don't run away from me!" said Miss Greta holding her by the dress. "We can at least speak calmly of the matter. You have no lover; you have no—the man that you visit then, must be your brother?"

"Ask me not, ask me not!" implored Clara, violently agitated. "As truly as I live, as truly as I hope to be saved, I cannot, and may not answer!"

"And may you not be ashamed of it? Can you calmly think of the ten commandments? Can you lay your hand on your heart, and protest that you are innocent?" demanded Miss Greta, while she gazed inquiringly at Clara.

"I can! I am!" said Clara, laying both her hands on her bosom.

"Well, then," said Miss Greta, "I will henceforward torment you with no more questions. I will not do like Thomas, I will believe without seeing. I believe you, my friend," and she regarded Clara with an expression of the deepest peace and joy.

There is perhaps no more beautiful feeling than that of unconditional, blind confidence. It may be the most foolish, but it may at the same time be the wisest and the most divine in man.

"For you see," continued Clara, while she drew to her both the hands of her friend, and gazed into her eyes with an almost wild aspect, "I have taken an oath—a sacred oath! I have sworn on the Bible to preserve eternal silence! It was a horrible oath—a horrible moment! perdition—death—passed over in it——" Clara shuddered.

"Gracious heavens!" thought Miss Greta, "here is probably some high treason at work! God protect the king!"

"But now," continued Clara, while she lifted her clasped hands on high, and raised her eyes towards heaven with an expression of the most intense thankfulness—"now, from this day forth I am free from all participation, from all secret concerns; now can I walk openly before men! God be praised! God be praised for ever!"

A crimson flush suffused Clara's cheeks; her eyes beamed; Miss Greta regarded her in this moment as nearly beautiful, but was terrified at this extraordinary excitement, and at her words. Softly she laid her hand on the agitated maiden's arm, and said earnestly—"Clara, I must yet put one more question, and you must answer it: Is there not some strange suffering in your secret? Perhaps some one suffers wrong; or there is danger at hand?"

"No! no!" cried Clara, "none, none in the world! All is good! all is over! and I repeat it, I can henceforth act freely and openly before the world. God be praised! God be praised and thanked!"

"Well then, now calm and content yourself," begged Miss Greta. But the violent sensations had shaken Clara's otherwise so quiet spirit. Her whole being was thrown out of equilibrium, and she fell into violent convulsions. Miss Greta sprinkled her with *eau de Cologne*, gave her Prince's drops, and wished, for the first time, that she was less sensi-

tive, less excitable. By degrees Clara became composed; and at length slept calmly with her head resting on the knee of her friend. As it however belonged to Miss Greta's peculiarities to give a humorous close to all scenes in which she played a chief part, both the friends, before the evening was over, were heard heartily laughing.

In the first place Miss Greta succeeded in convincing Clara that she would be far more useful to herself and her fellow-creatures in the position which she offered her, than in any other; that she in this manner would most beautifully fulfil the will of God, which consists, especially, in people making each other happy. When all this was arranged and settled, Miss Greta—who felt herself as Clara's motherly friend authorised to labour at Clara's education—gave her, half in sport and half in earnest, a little lecture on her former behaviour, on her indifference, her eternal sewing, her uncourteousness, all which she painted in the most repulsive features. She warned Clara for the future, most earnestly, to refrain from these things, and threatened to throw all luckless sewing apparatus into the fire which prevented her listening to people. Clara laughed, promised amendment; and Miss Greta promised on the other hand no longer to torment her with the subject of marriage. At the same time she wished that Clara would think seriously as it respected Baron H. But even here she had turned the page, and she no longer asked whether Clara were worthy of the Baron, but whether the Baron were worthy of her—whether he loved her sincerely from his heart, and did not merely wish to possess in her a housewife. The origin of the little Filius became again of importance to her, and she resolved thoroughly to search out what spirit's child he was. All this she proposed to prosecute at the most favourable opportunity. Finally, she made comparison of her present and former sentiments towards Clara, and in conclusion, asked:

“But tell me, how could you be so deaf and dumb towards me?”

“Because then I did not love you,” was Clara's answer.

“And now?”

“Now—no, long, long ago with my whole soul—for my whole life!”

It is charming when young girls attach themselves to each

other, live with one another, and play like the waves on the shore, like the wind with the young leaves. But beautiful is it when women with a noble character, confirmed by life, prove each other, and value each other, and form genuine friendships. Such bonds of friendships take place more frequently in life than is commonly believed; and when I see two female friends living under one roof, it does my heart good; for I know that there is found that which makes life pleasant, the days light and happy.

And what indeed require we more for happiness than a lawful freedom, daily bread, A FRIEND, and—now and then a refreshing thought, a light breath from the sphere of a higher life,—a little listening to the conversation which the good and the wise from antiquity to the present time hold with each other,—a little attention to the great drama the world, and the words of the poets,—yes, a little intercourse with the things which expand the breast and amend the heart, so that we do not shrink together too much into the little narrow self, into the impoverishment of mere housekeeping existence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ONWARDS.

O very well, then—go on!

The Yawning Gentleman.

THERE are dead calms not only on the sea, but on land and in life. History has its periods of dead calm, man finds them in his life; even days and hours have their calms. This is a lazy, yawning time. The dead calm is not repose. It is a standstill, a half-sleep, a dead lock, without progress or activity. If we write a story out of every-day life, we must indeed treat of everything; only save us from having to paint the periods of dead calm—the quintessence of so many existences. These we must rush rapidly over, otherwise we run the hazard of not being read, or of occasioning a sea-sickness to the faithfully waiting reader. But with secret horror do I perceive that it is highly necessary to steer rapidly onwards, for the wind in my story has for some time fallen conspicuously. The winter life in the capital, of which I sketched a little, has lulled and impeded it; therefore on-

wards, onwards, and away, from this time. While the wind, however, yet blows but faintly, it might not be amiss, for the entertainment of my passengers, here to lift a veil, here to draw back a curtain, here to peep behind a jealousy, and to look about a little in general after our friends.

We cannot omit, in the next place, to depict with great delight the consternation of the Countess Natalie, the joy of the three wild brothers, the long face of the lady's-maid Rosalie, and the joy-beaming one of the cook, who was heartily devoted to Clara, at the moment when Miss Greta with her decided tone and manner declared that Clara and her affairs belonged now to her. By this decisive step she smothered all tittle-tattle, and gave to the glory of innocence which surrounded the head of Clara a new splendour.

As little can we deny ourselves the pleasure of casting a glance into Clara's new home, and seeing how, in the genial sunshine of friendship and kindness, to Miss Greta's great joy, she developed her extraordinary skill in flower-painting from nature, a talent which she herself laid the foundation of during a life which had so few flowers. Miss Greta read to her, while she painted, the *Memoirs of the Duchess of Abrantes*, and other books of the kind, which opened Clara's eyes to the living and brilliant play of the colours of existence, and at once amused and surprised her. Her ideas of life could not be disturbed, for they were true. The same were Miss Greta's. Both had hitherto been too exclusive, now they brightened and harmonized each other. Miss Greta often laid the book down and watched Clara's painting, still oftener did she look into her quiet contented eyes. She laid her hand on Clara's shoulder; Clara looked up, and the souls of the two friends met in an affectionate glance; then Miss Greta returned to her book, Clara painted on at her flowers, and life seemed to both light and lovely. Clara's quiet, beneficial activity, enlarged also the view of her friend in the household sphere of life, gave to her a more attractive earnestness, and a multiplied interest.

We must also cast a passing glance on Clara's lovers: Mr. Frederiks did not love waiting, and aimed on all occasions at speedy results. After a second discourse with Clara, he pressed her hand respectfully, and said affectionately, "God

bless you!" Three months afterwards the blessings of the church were pronounced over him and a new spouse.

Baron H. persevered. He continued to show Clara the most marked attention; which yet even more and more assumed the expression of fatherly affection. He divided his time and interest between Clara and Miss Greta, who again recommenced her inquiries respecting Filius, but which the Baron continued with equal ingenuity to elude. Miss Greta had got it into her head—I know not how—that Filius was the son of an opera-dancer. Miss Greta cherished, as we must admit, many prejudices. She scorned that existence, "with the legs in the air," and this suspected *liaison*, which moreover wounded her feeling of moral propriety, appended to the good qualities of the Baron a dubious—but. It was given him to understand that if Clara consented to a union with him, he could only receive her hand through the consent of Miss Greta. Baron H. replied with his wonted gallantry, that the beloved hand would only through this medium become dearer to him. Clara continued to behave in the spirit of her first negative answer; Baron H. continued not to trouble himself about it, and the cordiality of his disposition, the fatherly kindness of his demeanour, produced by degrees in Clara a pleasure in his attentions, and a sincerely friendly feeling towards him. Filius sketched her portrait in a vast variety of styles.

Nina was and continued the object of all eyes and all homages. Count Ludwig was perpetually about her; their behaviour to each other was friendly, but without confidence. All around her was glittering and attractive, yet her eye betrayed even more and more an internal joylessness. From day to day sunk she deeper in a dreamy inactivity, which the Countess constantly promoted. Languid and lovely, reposing on soft silken cushions, surrounded by splendid flowers, she read the newest French novels, with which the Countess continually supplied her. The clever but immoral Balzac, the highly imaginative but chaotic Victor Hugo, and the whole swarm of their imitators, were never out of her hands. By degrees a certain change in her seemed to take place. Her dress was gayer, and bore no longer the stamp of strict modesty; she leant her ear willingly to the manifold flat-

teries which became only the bolder and closer in their approach. She lost by degrees something of her noble simplicity, and descended more to the level of ordinary mortals. O Nina, Nina! instead of elevating—as Edla hoped—those around thee, even deeper sankest thou down towards them! Poor Edla!

But not to judge too severely of Nina, we will observe her a little nearer. Let us cast a look into the depth of her soul; let us always do this if possible with erring brethren—our censure will then often be softened into pity. We will observe her in one of those moments in which she endeavours to collect herself in solitude, and to reduce her thoughts to paper; an excellent usage, which I cannot sufficiently recommend to my fair young readers. Nina writes—

“Edla bade me write down my thoughts, my sensations, that I might be thus able to judge of the impressions of life upon me. Why do I it not? Why do I so reluctantly take up the pen? I have nothing to write. My impressions are weak; I cannot arrange my thoughts. All is so dark within and around me. All is so confused. Life—men—what are they in reality?”

“Thou lettest them pass away as a stream, and they are as a sleep; like as the grass, which yet speedily withereth.

“We haste away like water, which we cannot detain.

“Edla gave me another and a higher doctrine. Why will it not become living in me? Edla, I admire thee! I admire thy strength! but I myself shall never possess it. Ah! my life is the waving of the wind, which speeds on, and knows not whence it cometh or whither it goeth; it is like the waves of the sea, which rise and fall, and leave no trace behind; it is like the fog, which, damp and joyless, floats over flowery meadows, tarries a night, and disappears.

“But, O my God! thou who didst create me, thou wilt not reject me on account of my weakness. The feeble seed which could not develop itself in this earth, thou wilt one day call into life beneath another sun. Yes, yes, yes, that I do believe.

“It is certainly great and noble in life to desire only one thing, to advance unchangeably towards one fixed goal; to do the right without weakness and wavering! But must this virtue be wholly bound up with hardness and severity? Was He

hard, the Divine one, who walked the earth as a model for mankind? Ludwig is hard—Ludwig gives me pain.

“O kindness! O love!

“Love! What was it which I lately felt in the innermost depths of my soul? It was as if a ray of light broke through it. What a heavenly sensation! Ah! to experience that in long draughts, which I now only have a glimpse of, and then—to die! It was like lightning—but it is past. All is again dark. My soul is faint.

“I permit myself to be led by other people. I become common amongst the common. Foolish speech! They whom I style common are probably better than I. Happier they certainly are. When Edla was near me, it was better with me.

“Ludwig does not love me. He loves only himself. Edla? Edla has given me up. She needs me not. To whom am I necessary? Mina! my little sister! why went you so early away to the angels of God, and left me alone? Had Mina lived, I had been different. But now—the darkness, the deathly-cold, which formerly enveloped me, I fear will never wholly leave me—I fear they have completely become masters of my life. Oh, that night!—the coffin—the silence of death—the icy-cold—these I shall never, never forget.

“Life! what is life? To breathe lightly and joyfully? I do not live—and I fear to die. The grave is my image of horror, on which I cannot think! I would often so gladly, so very gladly awake out of the slumber which oppresses my soul. I see my fellow-creatures so joyous around me, I would be as they are. I endeavour to resemble them, and to do as they do. I will yet seek what it means—to live! to enjoy!”

In our hasty transit to fresh occurrences, we will not, however, forget Edla, nor to withdraw the curtain from the scene of her present obscurity.

Beautiful and refreshing is the call to console innocent suffering. The highest duty which heaven demands, the noblest which earth offers, has this object. Even the potent tongue of flattery mayst thou here employ, for the work is holy. But unspeakably heavy and irksome is the call, to raise again those who have sunk through their own faults. And this was Edla's employment.

Frivolity, folly, a glittering life, debts, bankruptcy, want, and contempt, constituted the history of the married pair with whom Edla now found herself. Husband and wife had faithfully helped each other to dissipate a considerable fortune. Now they stood deserted; children and necessity grew up together in the house; the world pointed with the finger at them, and the fearful pressure of life came over them; a pressure so well known, both to the innocent and the guilty: but to the latter—and justly—the most insupportable. To them morning comes, but brings no refreshment; the dawning day brings no light: spring displays all its enchantments, its transports thrill through all the veins of nature, but the soul of man becomes neither young nor glad. Gloomy and thick as a December fog, it lies on their senses. The sight of their fellow-men gives them pain; they fly from their presence. The glorious pictures of nature and of art are lost to them, are without value, and all that is beautiful and delightful awakes only—bitterness. Ever more oppressively, more wearily, roll the years away. Ever fainter, in more indifference and exclusion, do they pass their days. They speak of death, of the grave, but only as of a long death-sleep, only as a respite from long-enduring pain.

Such was the home and such the people to whom Edla came. She came with her firm soul, with her clear, circum-spect mind, and her strengthening presence produced an auspicious change. The wife raised herself from her sick-bed, on which the weariness of life had thrown her. The husband remained away from the noisy stupifying company in which he sought to drown the sense of his suffering. The children collected instinctively about the friendly, considerate stranger. Edla did not permit the first impression which she made to pass away. Her relatives were capable of instruction; people who possessed good but neglected talents, and who valued themselves less, the more they perceived the value of their wasted life. She opened their eyes to the truths of life, to order and beauty; she revived in them the courage to raise themselves again, showed them the way, and called forth in them a noble ambition. Not like Job's comforters did Edla comfort and exhort; she said with the Chinese philosopher—"Where are there men without faults?"

But we must make ourselves acquainted with these faults, and expunge them; and this change renews the heart. Repentance is the spring-time of virtue. Repentance and amendment make men great. Great and little faults, great and small trespasses, will then be forgiven. He who thus purifies his own heart, flings purity and a precious glory over all that surrounds and approaches him."

Edla's relatives listened eagerly to her doctrines, and took the path she pointed out to them. Not alone with good counsel and good teaching did Edla help them, but also—pardon me, Edla! methinks I see thy displeased glance! Thou needest not, and desirest not acknowledgment and the praise of men.

When spring came, and Edla saw courage and activity prevailing in the house which she found so deeply sunken, she was seized with an inconceivable longing for home and Nina, the dearest object of all her wishes, all her thoughts and feelings. Nina wrote but seldom, always affectionately, but briefly and on unimportant subjects. From her childhood writing had been her aversion. This dreamy life deprived her of the power of expressing herself. When Edla learned that Nina went to the baths, she resolved also to journey thither and to surprise her beloved sister.

If we have no official intelligence of this journey to the baths, it is because we forgot to make a formal visit to the President and his lady. The Countess was nervous—of course, and as Miss Greta's strength did not progress quite satisfactorily, a journey to the baths was therefore prescribed, and the Countess knew how to tune her physician, so that he found the very same remedy necessary for the President and Nina, whose pale cheeks reproached the life of the past winter. And as a general bath journey was resolved on, we, my readers, will follow the stream, and seek out refreshment too.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE WATERING-PLACE.

Your health, mankind!—FÄNIG.

Oh! I would clasp the whole of human kind
 Unto my warm and love-overflowing heart;
 Would with its blood appease all human pain,
 And with its pulses kindle only joy.—FR.

SEEST thou, my reader, those long avenues of lofty lime-trees and maples, whose thick foliage is transpierced by the golden beams of the sun? Seest thou how, right and left, they are surrounded by green meadows, on which small neat wooden houses are scattered, from the doors of which people stream past with glasses in their hands? Seest thou how these greet one another, and begin their common promenade towards the fountain and the saloon? Poor and rich, high and low, invalids in body and soul, all move thitherward, in order to drink life from the bosom of nature. The kind mother! her rich wells flow for all, all! She makes no difference amongst her children; she knows nothing of a step-child, and offers to all her life and strength.

The morning is fresh and even a little cool. The dew lies silvery on the grass, and the bents bow themselves heavily beneath the bright load of pearls. The fresh sharp air causes many forgotten roses to bloom again on sickly cheeks. The swallows circle hither and thither, and the chorus of chaffinches and titlarks shout from the tops of the trees a thousand-fold vivats!

The President's family distinguishes itself amongst the guests of the bath by a tasteful toilette, and the noble simplicity of their bearing, the certain sign of aristocratic rank. Nina's beauty sets all the *lorgnettes* in motion. The gentlemen of the highest class amongst the visitors of the bath speedily surround this group. Many are old acquaintances, others would be so. Wealth, beauty, and rank, assert their pretensions in the world, let people demonstrate as much as they please that all is but dust and ashes. No one noticed Clara, but Clara enjoyed more than they all. She had never before been at a watering-place; had never before heard the song of birds on a fresh clear morning, had never seen the pearls of dew glitter in the grass, knew not the fragrance of plants, and the balm of the wide free air. Now

she perceived the glory of the earth, her heart was full, yes, overflowing; it swelled to thank the Creator for all his wonders; and she feared lest she should burst into tears. Miss Greta observed the deep emotion of her soul, and sought with friendly sportiveness to moderate it. The two soon separated themselves from the rest, and advanced down the avenue. And who comes towards them, tall, stately, and well-fed; the head somewhat thrown back, with a full, friendly, smiling countenance, and followed by a little boy, whose blond head nearly buried itself in his jacket collar, as if he would defend his ears from the morning air? Who but Baron H. and his Filius! In a direct line he marched up to Miss Greta and Clara, who received him with some degree of surprise, but with great cordiality. Filius even is caressed by Miss Greta—who is not affectionate in free nature? They seated themselves on a bench under the trees. The avenue became every moment fuller of promenaders, whom the sunshine allured from the dusty saloon of the fountain.

Baron H. distributed on all sides salutations, hand-shakes, and friendly nods, for he knew the whole world. Miss Greta took the *lorgnette* to her aid, and Baron H. made known to her the passers-by, in his peculiar, lively manner.

“There, my most gracious, goes a man who once in his life played the fool, and since then has constantly shown himself a brave fellow. Near us stands another, who one fine day achieved an exploit *à la Titus*, set himself therefore to drink to the glory of it, and drank and drank himself down to the lowest step of humanity. One may see by this——”

“That one swallow makes no summer,” said Miss Greta.

“Excellent! that is just what I mean. This oldish, rather venerable lady in the gay shawl, is my gracious aunt Q. In my youth I was much in her house. They were happy days for me when I saw her about to read a romance; on the contrary, anxiety pressed my heart together when she took up a sermon. Good humour, acquiescence, and absolution for all faults, were the effect of the romance. A gloomily furrowed brow, severity, morals, and all sorts of interdictions, were the fruit of the sermon; from which one might obviously draw the conclusion, that we ought only to read romances, and no sermons.”

"See!" said Clara, with an expression of the deepest sympathy—"see this unfortunate young woman who seems quite lame, and looks so ill. Do you know her?"

"Quite well. It is Fanny M., a poor girl without parents or relatives, and who does not know a single day of health."

"Good heaven!" sighed Clara with tearful eyes, "that is a sorrowful life."

"Not so much so as it appears. She has an amusement which lifts her above the troubles of life, and allows her to make many heavenly pilgrimages."

"And this is——"

"The reading of the best and most celebrated poets and authors. As it is her destiny on earth to be a wormeaten flower, she drinks the dew of life out of a higher world, whose prophets are the poets. Who shall blame her for this, and not much rather from their hearts wish her happiness through it? Talk to her of Klopstock, and you will see how the languid eye will kindle."

And Clara's eye kindled at the thought of a comforted unfortunate. Miss Greta's attention was distracted by the passers-by.

"Tell me, above all things, good Baron, who are this extraordinarily ugly and so faithfully-adhering-together family? Father and mother, five daughters, and three sons,—did one ever see anything so owl-like? What people are they? I think they must be a great burden to each other."

"The best and happiest people in the world! Good, cheerful, witty, accomplished, well-informed, and so affectionate to one another, that they are completely contented, and ask very little what the rest of the world thinks of them."

"I thank you for the solution! But tell me, I pray, who is the lady in the swing opposite to us? She greeted you awhile ago. She makes a painful impression on me. Her features are noble, but not pleasing; there is something sinister in her expression. She is silent and gloomy as a mummy. Has she committed some crime? Can she be as others are? Can she speak a cheerful word and laugh?"

"That can she not; she can only pray. In those downcast eyes, that gloomy countenance, which belongs rather to death than to life, we see that prayer only can save her from a deep thought which might degenerate into madness. I

have been told that she had formerly a lover who was unworthy of her, and who died an evil death, that is, by his own hand. So much I know of Sophia T., that she is not happy in her paternal home. Father, mother, brothers, and sisters, are characters who are totally unlike herself, and therefore live in perpetual discord with her. Noisy contention and strife are the music of the house, and all exert themselves to outbawl each other."

"The intolerable creatures! and she, the poor girl?"

"She keeps silence. She fleets away like a shadow, and lingers in this world only to pray for the unworthy one whom she loved, and for those who make her daily life a torment. Her expression reminds one of a martyr of Domenichino. It is a silent, but living *Miserere*."

"Gracious heaven! an incessant prayer and this unblessed expression of countenance! It would make one despair."

"We ought never to do that. However long she may pray, she will finally gain an entrance into heaven; but everything has its time. Do not look so much at her; it is not good, and can do nothing for her. She must bear her burden like many others."

"And if she become insane?"

"That has many a one been before her, and it is not the worst that can happen. The night of the insane has also its morning. But let us notice something more agreeable. Can you imagine now on what the gentleman there with the long legs lives? What gives him strength and courage to bear his existence? It is FORGETFULNESS! He forgets everything, except his dinner; care and joy, friendship and enmity. At night he has forgotten yesterday, and therefore he awakes in the morning a new man; or rather a new creature, if that seems to you more appropriate. And he there with the quiet manner, the serious brow, whose figure reminds you somewhat of a trunk,—do you know what gives him joy of heart, activity, and freshness of life? It is MEMORY! His whole life is thankfulness. He lives, thinks, and strives only to acquire a fortune for the children of his benefactor."

"That is brave!" exclaimed Miss Greta.

"So say I too, and—ah! your most humble servant, Lady Presi—, a charming, dear lady. She has a delightful way of chatting on for whole hours; only it somewhat wearies

one that she speaks always of herself, of her experiences and merits, and especially of her rule never to speak or to think of herself. To listen to her, you would think that she lived from morning till night in a perpetual state of self-denial only for the sake of others, reckoning her own will and pleasure as nothing, but only taking thought for the comfort of her husband, the children, and the sister-in-law. (N.B.—I know many other ladies who live in the same sweet conviction.) Quite touched by her own excellence, she receives with modest assurance all that the poets and other people of that kind say of the excellences of ladies, and looks upon herself as an actual angel. (See the N.B. above.) But a good friend has whispered me that her husband one day, on an acquaintance exclaiming, ‘Your angel of a wife,’ in the spleen of his heart replied, ‘Yes, indeed, a lovely angel!’”

Miss Greta laughed and said, “You seem to find no angels amongst the ladies.”

“Yes, my most gracious one, I see more angels amongst them than is good for my head and heart; but *my* angels do not praise themselves.”

“And in that they are right; for nothing is more fatal. But who is this? The gentleman looks like an author of great works, which I, however, have no desire to read.”

“I must admire your good taste. He is actually an author, and indeed the writer of a book on the destination of woman; the contents of which may be said to be this:—‘The wife shall be educated for the husband. Thou shalt be obedient to thy husband. Thou shalt endeavour to please him in every imaginable manner. Has he faults; seek in deep humility to correct them, and that without his knowing of it. If they cannot be eradicated, seek then to hide them from the world, and love him only the more tenderly. In short, thou shalt only exist for thy husband, be submissive, and perfect for all time. Amen!’”

“Do you know, Baron,” said Miss Greta, “I often wish that you would turn author. I am persuaded you would give us many a good and profitable book.”

“Do you know, my gracious lady, that I for a long time cherished the same conviction, and was already in the act of entering this path. I began to write a philosophical romance, and was quite amazed at the wisdom and benevolence which

flowed from my pen, and which was to pass thence into the hearts of men. It seemed to me as if the world could not exist without my book, and I could scarcely conceive how it had been carried on without it till this time. I was already in the midst of my 'Opus,' when one day I took up the catechism in order to examine a little boy. I soon began to read for myself, and I can give you no idea of the impression which this perusal made upon me. Yes, I was as much moved as charmed and ashamed, when I saw as clear as the sun that the world was already in possession of all that it needed for eternity. I immediately arose, and burned my manuscript, whose best thoughts I now saw were but an extract from the catechism; and from that time the voice of my understanding, whenever I have got a longing to instruct mankind, has invariably shouted to me with a tone of thunder—'They have Moses and the Prophets! if they hear them not, neither would they listen though one should rise from the dead!'

"Very fine, dear Baron. But pardon me if I am disposed to believe that the 'divine laziness' has also a small part in the honour with which Moses and the Prophets inspired you against your work; and I confess that I am far from participating in your opinion of the sufficiency of a single book. Besides this, I need books to amuse me."

"You wish to be amused! Well then, my most gracious, do observe that gentleman with the heavy, and that lady with the light, gait, who wander inseparably together in quest of pleasure, like two dogs in couples who continually snarl and bite each other. Never did heaven, perhaps, create such a brother and sister. He finds difficulties in everything, in life, in death—in the latter of which he is probably right enough,—in standing, going, sitting, and lying; enough, one cannot conceive how he gets through the world. She, on the contrary, belongs to the good-natured but obscure optimists, who, without knowing why, continually explain and protest 'that everything in the world is for the best.' She says of the earthquake in Lisbon, and of the horrors of the French revolution, that they were certainly for some good purpose. Is it bad weather? then she declares it will be all the finer for it to-morrow; and if the last day was arrived, and the destruction of the world, I am certain she would find a moment

to assure some perishing fellow-Christian that 'it will all turn out for the best.' And certain as I am that this view of things *au fond* is quite correct, Christian, and sensible, yet I cannot deny but that the good lady often reminds me of the parrot, which, while a turkey-cock was pecking out its eyes, continued crying—'That is beautiful! that is beautiful!' I once had a mind to fall in love with her, for I would fain myself look at life on its best side, and it seemed to me that life must pass lightly with one who takes it so easily; but when she consoled me in a cursed attack of gout which tormented me for a whole year also with her 'all for the best,' the affair broke suddenly off. For the rest, I can only from my heart wish her luck with her views of life, and must admire her patience with the heavy-blooded brother, who cannot live without her, and yet is in a continual fever of contradiction with her. The singularly-dressed lady who follows her——"

"Ah! Madame K.; I know her," interposed Miss Greta. "This person has more than once tempted me to commit some folly or stupidity, or to defend them. When she spoke or listened, I became invariably thoughtless or giddy."

"You astonish me, since she is precisely the opposite of giddy."

"Exactly so; or rather, because she is so in a heavy, pompous way. She will be philosophical, I take it; and reasons, demonstrates, and refutes to eternity. A thousand times in her company occur to me the words of the Bible—'Let thy conversation be yea, yea, nay, nay; for whatever is more than this cometh of evil.' You smile, Clara; I see you think with me."

"And yet," observed the Baron, "this inquiry and disquisition may have a very honourable foundation; it is the necessity of explaining the world to her own satisfaction."

"You open up to me there a new view," said Miss Greta, after a moment's reflection; "but in no case will I be one of those who receive the exposition from her, since she seems to me to have a wrong bent in her inquiries. I had a thousand times rather hear the good Madame N., who talks incessantly, but with all her soul, of her children and domestics."

"I admit that you are right, and am of your taste; this subject of conversation may be as good as any other for the time, and the mind is much influenced——"

Here Miss Greta laid her hand on the Baron's arm, and said softly, but earnestly, "In the name of heaven who is that?—who is that?—the lady there in the black dress, who just now goes round the elder-hedge? She looks like a wandering shade, and casts such a curious keen glance at us."

Scarcely had Baron H. set his eyes on the black-attired lady, who at this moment disappeared behind the elder-hedge, than, as if struck with an electric shock, he sprang up and darted like an arrow after her. Miss Greta gazed after him with wonder and curiosity. They met next in the fountain saloon, and the Baron, quite out of breath, flurried, and in perspiration, said only that he had fancied he saw an acquaintance in the lady, but could not find her.

The little critical company now went on in silence, and filled and drank the prescribed glass religiously. While they are drinking and promenading, however, we will continue this criticism a little, hover with our eyes and thoughts over the swarming multitude, and confide to the reader our observations. For the doings and sufferings, life and action, of men, are a subject which does not soon weary the attention; to see how variously the world reflects itself in the many, and yet how we constantly recognise human nature. All have the spirit of God and the prospect of death.

And death? Can we read anything of this in yon charming little head, which glances so gaily and full of life's enjoyment around on the world? Its young possessor knows at least little about it. She loves the dance, music, a glad word and glad faces, the sun and the flowers. Her soul is turned completely towards the sunny side of life; she dreads the other like sin. She dances through life, innocent, singing, and playing. Let no surly fellow shake his head at her; human life needs also its sky-larks—

Sing, sing,
Spread the wing,
In the sunshine soar;
Let the priests,
Fat with feasts,
Hum their masses o'er.

Grief avaunt!
Let thy chant
Life's delights express;
And thy mirth
Drive from earth
All its weariness;

Still the woes
 Virtue knows;
 Let its path be trod,
 With glad chime
 Till it climb
 To the throne of God!

LIFE'S WEARINESS!—Yes, if thou canst, refresh the spirit of life. See how yon bowed head steals to the fountain, not daring to hope, and knowing not joy. On the green tree on which I had already hung my lyre I will also sing for it a little song:

Is for thee earth's wide horizon,
 Void of hope and full of gloom?
 Hopest thou to find no quiet
 But the slumber of the tomb?
 Oh! one means there yet is given
 For all suffering void of shame,
 One whose conquering force ne'er faileth—
 Patience is its heavenly name.
 Yes, it is the tranquil haven
 Where the seaman drops his oar;
 Joy unto earth's weary wanderer,
 When his eye hath caught that shore.
 Patience stills all earthly sorrow,
 Calls forth day from midnight's gloom;
 And the thorn-crown of the sufferer
 Doth the victor's wreath become.

But where was I just now? Ah, truly, at the watering-place. I sang joy and patience. Good!

But the poetical vein springs up with the lightest pressure, and its playful outpourings mingle with the waters of eternal life, which incessantly flow in the human soul from immortal fountains. I will pursue it, and observe the souls whom it will bless. Here are the good, the loving, they who breathe in mutual affection; how much good they do to my heart! How light and serene the air is in their neighbourhood! Here are the powerful, they who carve out their own fate with a mighty will, whose every respiration sends forth great thoughts,—who observe life and themselves from the highest point of view. The sight of them is strengthening. Their eye is clear—is it to be wondered at? Have they not sought for and found the truth, the beautiful, the glorious, the love-deserving truth.

But they also to whom nature has not given great strength, has not endowed with the rich joys of life, who on the contrary

receive with contentedness the crumbs which fall from the table of life, without wearying Heaven with desiring wishes and prayers,—the little insignificant ones, unnoticed by the world,—how beautifully, how properly do these also make a part of the ordination of Heaven! How many a tranquil life there is which enjoys flowers, birds, a room on the sunny side, and where, cherishing these care-free children of nature, it wins something of their tranquillity and freshness of life. It is delightful to reflect how manifold are the fountains of joy which the all-good Father has provided for his children—and how He reveals himself in them. We become sensible of His presence not alone in the hours of religious observation; the divine spark lives in all the members of life, and every pure human effort calls forth its flames of joy. Love, nature, science, art, philosophy—are they not all thoughts of Him, emanations of God? Does not one or other of these regions offer to man a fatherland, in which he can build himself a home and dwell happily? The same heaven, the eternal sunbeam of the same love, expands itself over us all. How often does it suddenly penetrate man as he goes on his way, amid his own activity, with an inexpressible clearness, with an infinite happiness,—the beam of a higher, incomprehensible life passes over him, and he is compelled to exclaim, “There is a God!”

And yet there are so many poor forlorn ones who are in want of everything which gives worth to life. It will not continue to be so! The prophets have had their time; the heroes their great days,—now comes the MAN. But mankind is legion; and every individual of this great mass steps forward in these days with his own authority before heaven, and demands room upon earth for his freedom, for his love, for his activity, and his happiness. That there should be at first much thronging and pushing, is only natural. All press towards the healing, fresh-bubbling fountain,—all will fill their cups. Many get thrust back and trodden down: but patience! it will be better: for the leaders of the people have spoken to the rocks, and these have opened their bosoms, and have poured forth a higher and a richer stream. In time all will be satisfied, all will have drunk.

One fountain is there whose deep-lying vein has only just begun to throw up its silvery drops among mankind—a

fountain which will allay the thirst of millions, and give to those who drink from it peace and joy.

It is Knowledge, the fountain of intellectual cultivation, which gives health to mankind, makes clear his vision, brings joy to his life, and breathes over his soul's destiny a deep repose. Go and drink therefrom, thou whom fortune has not favoured, and thou wilt soon feel thyself rich! Thou mayst go forth into the world and find thyself everywhere at home; thou canst cultivate thyself in thy own little chamber; thy friends are they who are ever around thee, they with whom thou pleasantly conversest are nature, antiquity, and heaven. The industrious kingdom of the ant, the works of man, the rainbow and runic records, offer to thy soul equal hospitality. The magnificence of creation illuminates not only thy eye, it glorifies thy thoughts, it enlightens thy understanding; oh, with such observations, with such impressions, feelings, and adorations, has not earthly life enough? Enough! O inexpressibly, infinitely much!

But how is it enough—how is it so much? Eternal Fountain of light and life! Because by that means we approach Thee, because by that means we press nearer to Thy being,—learn to know Thee better! If, as a great author says, “Paganism consists in the forgetfulness of the Creator in the created,” it befits certainly the true Christian everywhere to seek for the Creator in the created, to comprehend him, and to adore him.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRE AND WATER ORDEAL.

Brother mine, keep thou good heart,
Dance now! hark! they're playing!—BELLMAN.

AND of a certainty we must make merry and be glad—nature will have it so, and so will the Creator. Music and dancing furnish the fundamental idea in the great opera of creation. The worlds dance, singing, their circuit round the sun; the gnats dance their cotillions in the sunshine; the waves dance upon mother ocean's breast; the leaves in the wind; the winds play their own music to their wild polska; the child dances in the mother's arms; the emancipated fire is an eternal dance; the heaven itself has its shawl-dance,

and rapidly, now in one way, and now in another, drapes itself with clouds.

Savages dance in joy and pain; and the educated, who have brought those rude attempts to the highest degree of perfection, sing and dance, so that the animals listen, and the angels smile.

Upon a smooth green plot dance all the company at Ramlösa. Baron H. is kindly and zealously busied in introducing, right and left, dance-loving ladies and dance-loving gentlemen to each other. He compels, in all goodness, the dance-disliking to go forward in the circle, for Baron H. loved people to be merry and sociable. He had, by a silent but a universally accorded agreement, become the "*maître de plaisir*" of the bath company. He knew all the world, and was in favour with all the world; and knew so well how to manage the world, that people willingly put themselves into his hands, and found themselves all the better for his guidance. This part was exactly suited to his lively, inoffensive humour, although much less to the corpulence of his person, which did not find itself most comfortable therefrom. He appeared, however, to have resolved to subject this to particular suffering,—nay, he evidently was bent on getting released from his burden. Miss Greta joked with Clara on this proof of love; and prophesied that one of these fine days he would fall upon one knee before her, slender and elegant as Cousin Pasteaureau, and would get possession of her heart.

Cruel Miss Greta! Whilst Baron H. was labouring to make life to everybody around him light and agreeable, she was devising in her head the most dangerous machinations against his peace,—nay, even against his life. She determined on the very next opportunity to put the love of the Baron for Clara to several very hard probations. If she convinced herself that he sought Clara's hand out of pure, upright love, and that this courtship was not the result of a transient liking, or desire for a pleasant, comfortable life, with a quiet, patient, pretty young lady, then she would constitute herself his intercessor; if she found it otherwise, then she determined with seriousness and energy to put an end to all this love-making, which now had lasted more than three months, and made people already begin to talk. With this, she

united the plan of getting at the knowledge, either by good means or bad, of whence Filius properly was descended, and what relationship he had with his foster-father.

I must tell thee, dear reader, that Miss Greta was not a person by any means to play, when she had once taken anything seriously into her head.

But where were we just now? O, at the dance on the grass-plot. The evening is beautiful. The wind has ceased to rock the leaves and flowers; he slumbers now in the wood; yet the little birds sing an evening song to the sun. Nina's bewitching sylph-like form floats around in the waltz. Her partner is a young man, handsome as a statue, with the features of an Apollo and the smiles of Cupid. What is his name? We will call him Don Juan. What is there remarkable in Don Juan? He is the hero of Lord Byron's longest poem; a cousin of Richardson's Lovelace, and is renowned on account of his conquests over the weak of the fair sex, and consequently, according to the judgment of a certain thinker, an unquestionable favourite of all the ladies.

Holy Clarissa! Aurora Raby, thou the most lovely star-image which Byron conjured forth from his dark heaven! In your names protest we against this contracted judgment, and declare that that thinker only knew the ladies of great cities, already corrupted by the world, and not woman as she is properly and in truth!

Don Juan, in fact, was dangerous; for who could have foreboded treachery in that open, clear glance; in that cordial laughter; in that amiable, unconstrained demeanour? Who believe that licentiousness dwelt in a soul which appeared so warm for all that was good and beautiful; in a soul that sighed, in the hours of confidential intercourse, because he had not found that in life after which he sought, and because he had not become that which he wished to be?

Nina foreboded nothing, and allowed herself to be carried away by a feeling of delight which operated pleasantly upon her. The Countess saw sufficiently into this state of feeling, and therefore interested herself in the highest degree for the fascinating foreigner and his extraordinary musical talent. He was one of the most familiar members of her circle. Miss Greta saw very clearly into this affair, yet she was silent, and spoke shortly and coldly to Don Juan. Clara avoided

him from a kind of repugnance, for which she could assign no cause, and which resembled that wise, infallible instinct by which animals avoid an injurious plant; he, on the contrary, sought her—he very well knew why,—and testified by so doing to the truth of the remark so frequently made, that the voluptuary seeks after the pure especially, but not in order to elevate himself to them, but only to draw them down to him in the dust. Clara, however, in the mean time, appeared to be only a secondary thought for him, and from day to day he devoted more exclusively his attentions and his homage to the affectionate Nina.

But now back to the dance—no, the dance is at an end. Baron H., who had taken for his partner a lady whom nobody else had engaged, lay panting in the grass after an exhausting Mazurka. Miss Greta with her own hand presented him with a glass of lemonade. The President waited for his Countess, who, somewhat uneasy, looked about her for Nina, but who very soon forgot her anxiety in a most interesting conversation with a handsome colonel. Nina, in company with several young lady friends and acquaintance, had undertaken a walk to a distant and shadowy part of the park. Don Juan followed her, and endeavoured to fix her attention. Unobserved he separated her from the others, and then, as they all seated themselves to rest, he selected a place for Nina, sufficiently apart to speak with her unheard, and yet sufficiently near not to excite any anxiety in herself. The tranquillity of the warm evening, the shade of the leafy trees, all conspired to excite the melancholy tone of mind peculiar to Nina. Her beautiful brow rested dreamily on her hand, and she gazed into the twilight distance. The state of her feelings did not escape him; it was what he wanted. With a low, melodious voice he spoke of the emptiness of ordinary life, of its fetters and its coldness. He spoke of the life of Nature;—so warm and so full of love; in it, he said, was revealed the life and the goodness of God. He spoke of a life conformable with nature; therefore beautiful and rich, like that which the patriarchs led, or as man even now leads in beautiful warm countries, and in which every man has legitimate pretensions. He extolled the power of love to govern all things; he called it the blessed dream of life that alone improved and ennobled it. He quoted texts from the Gospel

of St. John. His words were clear; his voice charming; his conversation poetical. Nina saw not the serpent which lurked under the flowers. She listened almost without thought; an enchantment seemed to have come over her. Strange, confused, but agreeable feelings swelled in her breast; she gave herself up to them with a sort of enjoyment. Nature, as it were, infolded her; she had sunk into her bosom, had lost herself in her flower-odours, shadows, and dewdrops, and melted away into the wondrous life around her. A sea of pleasure overflowed her soul,—tears gushed to her eyes, that were cast down before the burning glances of Don Juan, which were rivetted immovably upon her and as with magic power.

The other groups were set in motion, and people rose in order to return. Nina rose also; she raised her eyes up to heaven and looked at the twinkling stars. These made a painful impression upon her. They seemed to look sternly and coldly. Edla's penetrating glance came to her remembrance. Nina sank her eyes with an involuntary desire to remove herself from Don Juan: this escaped not his experienced eye, and hastily, but in a low and troubled voice, he said, "Thanks for this hour, after long joyless years. The remembrance of it will be my good angel, and will teach me to bear more easily the weariness of life. Perhaps I appear to you inconstant and frivolous; yet a deep sentiment breathes in my heart. I was solitary—nobody understood me—nobody rightly knew me,—and I—never have been fortunate!"

The last words he spoke with an expression of the deepest feeling. He ceased, and offered his arm to Nina. She took it. He was indeed unhappy—nobody understood him. Silently they returned through the still, shadowy trees to the company, whose noise was unpleasant to them. Nina walked along with drooped eyelids, a riddle to herself; but she felt the looks which people directed to her.

The company was still assembled upon the dancing ground. They listened to a flute-player, who blew the last quavers as the walking party rejoined them. Don Juan was surrounded, and besought to set the crown to the pleasures of the evening by his universally acknowledged talent. He did not require long solicitation, but taking a guitar from the hands of the Countess, seated himself upon a mossy stone and preluded.

It was beautiful to see him as he sate there; the hand-

some head, with whose locks the evening wind played, sunk in thought, while the skilful white hand touched the strings. He sang, and all were ear. People had never heard anything more beautiful. It was a wild romance, which painted the pangs of unhappy love. Passion, crime, wild happiness, madness, and death, were depicted. The singer grew pale before his own tones; the listeners with him. A shudder of horror thrilled through the company, and the leaf of the tree trembled sympathetically. All were silent, as if almost stunned, whilst the last incoherent, melancholy accords, like death-sighs, floated away. He then rivetted a long, burning glance on Nina, and his voice became liquid and loving; the singer seemed as if drunken with enchantment. He sang now happy, free, paradisiacal love, as Albano and Correggio have painted it. In Nina's heart chords were touched which never had vibrated till then. Foreboding, desire, an infinite woe, and a nameless joy, seized upon her. Was it an abyss—was it a heaven, which was about to open itself before her? She knew not. She would that she might have died at that moment, and yet never before had she such a foretaste of the fulness and the affluence of life.

That which seized, however, so strongly on Nina's heart was not without its operation on others; and many a heart overflowed, and many an eye, whilst it filled with tears, cast a glance into a lost Eden. Many a rosy remembrance awoke in the breast of the grey-headed man and the elderly lady—no, that goes too far! We cannot spend our time in reckoning up all the impressions which every song makes. Great is the power of song, but great also is that of sleep, at least in our rather heavy north. Miss Greta was the first who made this remark, as turning herself to Baron H. she said—“The song is very beautiful, but not beautiful enough to keep us here the whole night. Let us do something that is better than sitting here—namely, let us go home.”

The Baron replied in a language which Miss Greta could not understand till she had observed him nearer; he lay in the grass, and—snored.

Miss Greta beckoned to Clara, and smiling showed her the sleeper.

“He will take cold,” said Clara with an anxious mien; took a shawl, and laid over him.

Was it the consequence of a dream, or did the wicked man

wake? Enough, as Clara bent herself in order to lay the shawl over him, he raised his arms. Clara drew herself up hastily, and he only caught hold of her hand, which he kissed heartily. Clara took it all quietly. Miss Greta looked on. Filius continued in the mean time business on his own account. He had this evening got up a little passion for a certain little Caroline, a pretty fifteen-years-old German girl, and was making love to her by drawing arabesques upon her shoes and the hem of her dress with a piece of chalk. It was in vain that the young girl repeated—"Let that alone, dear Filius! let me be quiet, dear youth! you are insufferable!" In vain—he was now in full inspiration, and seemed neither to hear nor to feel. Miss Greta, who sate near the persecuted girl, and had watched the goings on of Filius, addressed him in an authoritative tone. Filius turned himself silently round, and nearly in the same moment Miss Greta saw a great white Roman nose upon her own dark green silk dress. That was too much. Whilst Miss Greta noticed the scene between Baron H. and Clara, her fine lips compressed themselves almost imperceptibly together; a certain bitterness showed itself in her countenance, and her white fingers found their way to the blond locks of Filius, and "au! au! au!" resounded his shrill cry of pain.

Baron H. sprang up with the agility of a squirrel, and exclaimed "Filius!"

Filius, with violent sobs, hastened to his protector, and could only bring forth the words—"She lugged—lugged—lugged me!"

A certain astonishment, a consternation mingled with merriment, spread through the company, as Baron H. looked at Miss Greta with a countenance that seemed to demand an explanation. Miss Greta raised herself with some dignity, and said—"My good Baron, I am not going in the first place really to assert that he deserved the chastisement. All that I have to say is, that in future you yourself may undertake the office which I have found myself obliged to assume, and truly wholly in the way in which I have administered justice; otherwise the boy will be insupportable."

Baron H. answered not a syllable, but took Filius, who was already pacified by Clara, by the hand, and looked as if he were about to depart.

The remainder of the company dispersed at the same time. Clara hoped to receive her shawl again, but found that was not the case. The Baron wrapped it very calmly about himself, praised its warmth, its softness, and its "gentle character."

Miss Greta gave Clara one of her shawls, for she had several with her, and went silently homeward. When they were about to separate, Clara besought in the politest manner for her shawl. Baron H., however, put it into his pocket, and declared that he should preserve it as a keepsake.

Nina was accompanied by Don Juan to her own door. Again he fixed upon her one of his fiery glances, and then left her; and as she was going to bed, she was enchanted by a serenade which was sung delightfully from behind the hedge under her window. The moon shone bright; it shone upon her bed; the shadow of the dark cross of the window-frame lay directly upon her breast. Nina observed it. She lay under the emblem of suffering and renunciation, yet was she surrounded by a heavenly glory. Without lived love and song. Her heart beat uneasily; her thoughts were wildly tempested; her tears began to flow; and while she lay with arms crossed upon her bosom, she surrendered herself in still prayer to Him who read her heart better than herself, and who decided her fate.

That same evening Miss Greta called Clara to account for the words, "He will take cold," and gravely inquired whether she intended to keep him warm with only her shawl, or with her heart also. Clara negatived this question, at first laughingly, and then with much seriousness.

"Good," thought Miss Greta.

Notwithstanding this, Clara this evening had much to endure from her friend, who could be occasionally tolerably unmerciful, and who inquired often after the shawl which Clara had lost. Miss Greta declared also that she wished to see other proofs of the Baron's love to Clara, than those of stealing her clothes. Then again she would exclaim with a roguish glance, "I am quite curious to know what will be the end of the affair." But Clara exhibited no sensibility about these jests; she remained quite calm, and permitted nothing to mislead her. The good understanding, however, between Miss Greta and the Baron was really somewhat disturbed.

A certain constraint, a kind of cold politeness, for several days took the place of their former easy friendship.

But does it not really seem as if we had forgotten the President? We have truly not forgotten him; but near his brilliant wife, of whom he was very proud, and also somewhat jealous, he stepped more and more into the shade. He drank every day with the utmost scrupulosity his twelve glasses, and complained somewhat of his stomach and his temper; about which the Countess did not trouble herself. She practised music for hours with Don Juan and Nina. Alone with them, and especially with Nina, Don Juan developed his most admirable talents. He swam, as it were, in music, and became intoxicated by his own melody. Nina felt herself as if bewitched, and every day fell more and more into a state of mystical melancholy. Don Juan's passion for her betrayed itself every day more violently and more intelligibly. He surrounded her with his homage, with his songs, with his glowing poetical being; her life swung itself upon a sea of sweet sound and poetical delight.

As strong flower odours operate, so operated this musical breath of incense upon her; it was a delicious, but a stupifying sensation; a pleasant intoxication, a sweet poison—in which one may die, my reader—at least in the soul!

“But the pure angels in God's heaven, they sing truly also! Song is, of a truth, something so beautiful, so divine! How could the soul die of it?”

“The noblest work may, in the hands of the evil-disposed, become a means of ruin. There is fire which illumines and warms, but there is fire also which destroys.”

“But——”

“But! and but—thou affectionate angel, whose pure soprano I hope one day to hear in the chorus of singers in heaven—I have not time to-day to spend upon thee. Besides which, Clara, who is more pious, who is purer and better than I, will answer thy doubts.”

“Why do you almost always leave the room, Clara,” asked Miss Greta, “when Don Juan seats himself at the piano, and sings so that Nina almost dissolves away, and Natalie looks inspired, and turns her eyes on every side, excepting to that on which the President sits, who, however, does all that is possible to look inspired also? Tell me, why do you always go out then?”

Clara blushed, and answered smiling, "Because I will neither be dissolved by Don Juan's tones, nor will I be inspired by them;" she paused for a few moments, and then added, blushing still deeper, "I love music infinitely, and I have not a harder heart than Nina,—but there is something in Don Juan's music which does not please me. It excites, and enervates, without again tranquillising. There is something in it which tells me that his intentions are not pure and honest."

"But your heart and your understanding is so!" said Miss Greta, embracing her friend; "I only wish that that 'beautiful and perfect Nina,' as Natalie calls her, had but half your sense."

"Speak to her! warn her!" besought Clara with heartfelt warmth; "she is so young and so good!"

"With that I have nothing to do," returned Miss Greta with decision; "I do not properly understand that girl; and besides that, there very soon comes somebody who will speedily put an end to this commotion about Don Juan. We expect Count Ludwig one of these days, and I think then that he will cool the heat of these singing meetings. I have spoken indeed to Natalie, but that is the same as saying I have preached to deaf ears. Besides this, she has the talent of making white out of black, and——But the dinner-bell rings. Put on your tulle pelerine, Clara—that is, if you have one left; it is extremely odd of Baron H. that he——"

Clara stopped the jesting lips with a kiss, and hastened to accompany her friend to the *table d'hôte*.

Miss Greta seated herself at table by Baron H. It seemed as if they would become friends. The Baron, whose most brilliant time of the whole day was dinner-time, and who was possessed of the uncommon power of eating and talking at the same time, and of doing both with much zeal and taste—the Baron H. was quite "charmant." He conversed a great deal with Miss Greta on the education of children, and she imparted to him, half in jest and half in earnest, several very palpable pieces of advice, which might be more wholesome than agreeable to Filius. Miss Greta spoke even of his future, and inquired whether it would not be better that he followed his mother's profession on the boards—yet, remarked she at the same time, Filius appeared to have very little turn for dancing, and walked with his toes rather turned inwards.

The Baron looked at Miss Greta with the greatest astonishment, coughed, drank a glass of wine, and replied that the boy might learn just what he liked.

Miss Greta then advised the Baron to let him become a decorative painter, and related with much liveliness the history of the Roman nose and the lugging upon the dancing-ground. Both laughed at it. The Baron acknowledged that he had more than deserved the little correction, and besought Miss Greta's advice in the business of education, but he said nothing of actual participation in it. Miss Greta promised to do all that lay in her power, and therefore took care that the Baron, at least, should be served twice with all the delicacies that appeared on the table. They agreed so excellently on all points and in everything, that Clara, who sat opposite to them, smiled to herself at it, but did not observe how they agreed most of all in their good opinion of her and in her praise. The eyes of the Baron sparkled like two crystal balls on which the sun shone.

The great friendship of the antagonists even extended itself to the afternoon; and as Baron H., conformably to what Miss Greta called his "reducing system," proposed a long walk after dinner, she assented with the greatest willingness, although otherwise no great friend to walking. Clara pleased herself with the magnificent scenery which Baron H. promised to show, and walked tranquilly and happily by the side of her friends. Filius, who was still angry with Miss Greta, and looked at her now and then with a distrustful side-glance, showed himself nevertheless very lively, and plucked the loveliest flowers for Clara and his father. Miss Greta remarked, that if the boy were rude, he was on the other side true to those from whom he had experienced kindness. She almost resolved to attempt for once the gentle method with him, in order to obtain some power over him.

The gentleman with difficulties and the lady with gaieties were the only two of all the company who walked with them—we do not rightly know why: After they had gone a considerable distance, a thunder-cloud which made its appearance in the sky occasioned the difficult gentleman to assume a most woeful countenance, and Miss Greta to ask inwardly whether a storm, with lightning, thunder, and rain, might

not perhaps belong to the magnificent scenery which the Baron had promised her friend. Yet, either out of wantonness or good-humour, she said nothing of her doleful presentiments. Baron H. looked up once to the ever threatening and blackening clouds, and still continued the ramble in the very best of humours. Not so the difficult gentleman. He lingered a few paces behind with his sister, and Miss Greta heard the following dialogue between them :

"It seems to me that this will be a pretty affair! We shall have a thunder-storm, as sure as I am alive! The foolish Baron! We shall get pretty well soaked!"

"I assure you there is no danger. The thunder-storm will go over—the wind is just opposite to it."

"Opposite, opposite! Gracious heaven! what a thing it is! If the wind and the thunder-cloud are opposed to one another, how can the wind help otherwise than by filling all the sooner our eyes with dust and blowing away our hats? The wind is perfectly horrible! I should only like to know how the wind is good for anything in the world!"

"Certainly it is good for something. It pleases *me* very much; 'one goes forward so swiftly when one has the wind behind one's back. Besides this, an air-bath is now and then very agreeable to me—it is also healthy."

"Bathe as much as you have any wish for, in air or dust. I for my part desire to be excused. A drop of rain! Now we have it! It will not leave off again for eight days. Oh! I already perceive a return of my old rheumatic pain. Only see there—all the cursed water-masses are drawing together as if the Creator intended a second deluge!"

"You'll see that we shall get under shelter before it pours down. Those black stripes are nothing in themselves, and besides they are so far apart. Soon we shall be at the end of our ramble, and Baron H. has promised us good coffee then."

"Coffee? Yes, yes, I'll answer for it we shall drink coffee out of a rain-water puddle!"

"That we shall escape."

"Escape! I'll tell you what, escape is not to be spoken of. We shall all be drowned. This walk will be the death of me!"

"Should we not perhaps turn back? We shall certainly reach the bath without——"

"We shall reach nothing but a proper bath, and a thunder-storm into the bargain."

"But we can make the attempt, and hope for the best."

"No, say I! No, no, no!"

"But then what shall we do? It is certainly better to go somewhere—either forwards or backwards—than stay here."

"There we have it! What shall we do, is always said whenever people are about to commit some folly, and then people stand with their mouths wide open. Baron H. ! Baron H. ! we shall have a storm; we shall be drowned in a water-spout. I think that man is deaf! He hears no more than a stone. Baron H. !—H. !—Baron !"

Baron H. pretended to be deaf, and stepped onwards quicker than ever. At last, however, he received such a violent pluck by the coat-laps that he stumbled backwards a few steps, and fell with the whole weight of his body into the arms of the difficult gentleman, who screamed out with the whole strength of his lungs, "We shall have a storm! we shall have a storm!"

"Ah, bah!" said the Baron phlegmatically, and with some trouble suppressed his laughter.

"Ah bah here, and ah bah there! We shall have a storm, I say, and shall all of us be wet to the skin, and that entirely because of your wilfulness."

"We shall have no storm, I say; but if you are so fearful, look only about—there stands a barn. There is a roof under which, and hay upon which, you can rest till the danger is over."

"That is charming indeed," cried the sister.

"Charming! My sister finds everything charming; as if people did not know that the lightning always strikes barns. Besides which, the hay smells abominably—charming!"

Miss Greta could no longer contain herself: the peal of hearty laughter into which she burst annoyed the difficult gentleman to that degree that he took the arm of his sister, left the company, and posted off by the directest way to the barn. After Miss Greta had satisfied herself with laughter, in which the Baron, and even Clara, joined, she said somewhat gravely:

"For the rest, my dear Baron, I must tell you that a shower of rain, of all natural scenes, is that one for which

my curiosity is least of all excited ; and if you think that we shall soon have such a one, I beseech permission, at least for me and Clara, that we may enjoy it from the barn, spite of all the difficulties there."

Baron H., who, perhaps on account of the coffee, was especially desirous of reaching the end of their ramble, would not hear anything about the barn : he pledged himself for the passing over of the storm ;—the few rain-drops would signify nothing ;—the sun certainly would be enticed forth again by a lively song ; on which account he immediately struck up a song about spring, and that truly, as Miss Greta expressed it, "with the most infamous voice in the world." And see ! the sun actually showed himself, the storm dispersed, and the company merrily set forward on their way, after they had lavished in vain calls, signs, and beckonings of every kind, on the brother and sister in the barn. The wind, which impelled the clouds now more violently than ever before it, and which every minute increased in strength, became more and more troublesome to the rambles. Miss Greta was very soon heated and weary, which they in part might perceive by her becoming silent, and in part by her warning Clara to wrap her shawl closer about her, to hold her bonnet fast, and not to walk on the mown grass, which Clara had not been able to avoid, as she helped the little Filius to collect plants.

Baron H., on the contrary, became more and more lively, and praised his beautiful weather, and his beautiful sunshine. They were walking along the side of a brook, across which, from one high bank to the other, people had laid planks by way of a bridge. This crossing, however, seemed to be of so fragile a nature that any one might have feared, with reason, that it was not capable of sustaining a human being.

At this very moment a gust of wind carried away Clara's bonnet and veil, and lodged them in a fir-tree on the opposite bank. The astonishment and confusion of the company were great.

Now I assure thee, dear reader, that I do not at all know what mischief-loving demon put it into Miss Greta's head at this very moment to test the Baron's love to Clara.

Baron H. stood and looked at the bonnet in the fir-tree in a sort of astonishment, without giving the least evidence

in the world of any design of venturing over the dangerous bridge.

Miss Greta looked at him with the words—"Now, dear Baron?"

"Yes, my most gracious, that is a most disagreeable affair."

"A disagreeable? In your place I should call it a fortunate one. Here have we precisely one of those accidents so rare in our stiff, formal world, in which it is permitted to a lover to serve his fair one, and to exhibit the chivalrous feeling despite of danger. Certainly you will not allow this opportunity to pass over unused."

"Your most obedient servant. But, in the mean time, we will wait a little; a gust of wind carried the bonnet away, a gust of wind may bring it back again. We will yet see; let us only wait a little."

"I admire your patience," said Miss Greta. "Now, I foresee that to-morrow, at this very time, we shall be standing in this very same place; in the mean time, Clara's pretty bonnet will be dragged about famously, and the wind will occasion her headache and toothache."

"May I not offer you my hat, Mamselle Clara?"

"No, no, Baron; she does not take it, make yourself sure of that. She knows quite too well how to value the head of a fellow-creature for her to deprive it of its covering. No; if you would benefit Clara, you must think of some other way."

Baron H. had eaten a good dinner; he was warm with his ramble; only a knight like Don Quixote would wonder that with his eight-and-forty years he delayed to expose himself to a cold bath. Clara asserted repeatedly that she was quite able to go home without a bonnet, and that if anybody was to venture over the bridge, it should be herself. In vain she endeavoured to release herself from the arms of Miss Greta, who held her fast.

The three stood for some time in the wind looking across at the fluttering bonnet, and waiting for the fortunate gust of wind which the Baron had prophesied. At length, losing all patience, Miss Greta exclaimed—"No, I can endure it no longer! And as Baron H. thinks so little about Clara, and fears so very much to do anything for her, I shall go myself. Be quiet, Clara."

“That you shall not,” said the Baron very determinately, and held her back; “for although I do not like to put myself unnecessarily in danger, yet I fear a cold bath not at all, and least of all if it were taken for the good Clara.”

And with this, without any more ado, he mounted upon the wooden bridge, from under which a flock of ducks comfortably quacked and hissed.

Miss Greta, who invincibly held fast hold of Clara’s arm, sent after the Baron a half-audible observation on his word “unnecessarily;” yet very soon, however, did she follow with inward disquiet his steps over the wooden bridge, which bent more than she had expected. What feeling at this moment had sovereignty in her breast, whether fear or remorse, we cannot say, because she has not confessed it to any one.

In the mean time, the Baron was almost within reach of his object, without having met with any adventure, when that happened which it was impossible that any one could have foreseen. The fateful bridge consisted of three planks, the middle one of which was decayed. Baron H. had hitherto avoided the “*juste milieu*,” and had gone with one foot upon the left and the other upon the right plank, thus forming a sort of doorway by his legs, which suddenly inspired Filius with the desire to give his foster-father a surprise, and carry off the bonnet from the tree before him. Unfortunately the Baron was no Colossus of Rhodes, neither was Filius particularly agile; as he therefore suddenly threw himself like an arrow in the pass, instead of clearing his father at once, he got entangled between his legs. The father uttered a cry of surprise and horror, for he was very nearly losing his balance, and only recovered it by involuntarily raising his arm, which he let fall upon Filius. At the same moment Miss Greta ascended the bridge; in order, by separating the parties, to make an end of this extraordinary combat. This threefold burden was too much for the wooden bridge; it bent—it cracked—it broke!—and with a great noise the Baron, Miss Greta, and Filius, fell into the brook, directly down upon the peaceful ducks, which flew away with loud cries.

The waves closed over Baron H. When his head appeared again above water, he sent forth such extraordinary tones and sounds, that people—I think with King David—might

have said of him, "he cried like a crane, twittered like a swallow, and cooed like a dove." As soon, however, as he had sputtered out the water and wiped his eyes, he swam thence also like a swan, and hastened to the assistance of his unfortunate companions. Miss Greta in the mean time had not for one moment lost her customary decision. With one hand she had caught hold of the plank of the bridge, and with the other of the blond locks of Filius—this time, however, for a purpose quite different to the first,—and during this she had called to Clara, "not to be anxious, for that she was already safe." We know not, however, for all that, how she could ever have been so, had not Baron H. shoved along with great dexterity, first Filius and then herself, to where the shore of the brook was less steep, and offered a more easy landing-place. If the swimmers had had artistic thought enough to have grouped themselves somewhat more skilfully, they would have conferred a great pleasure on an artist; alas! however, there was not one there. Otherwise Baron H., with his lively, good-humoured countenance, might have been a perfect river-god; Miss Greta, with her fair complexion and her regular features, a stately Naiad, and Filius a little purling brook: as it was, the three floundering in the water never thought of it.

Baron H. laid down his precious burden on the grass of the shore, where she was received by the pale and terrified Clara. He himself, however, who appeared to have found swimming to his taste, ascended only on shore to take off his coat, after which he again plunged into the water, swam over to the other side, and soon returned, bearing Clara's bonnet back in triumph. He held it forth with one hand, as he worked his way through the water with the other. Miss Greta was enchanted with this chivalric behaviour; her taste for the comic had in this accident found abundant food, and the whole procession of the immersed gave occasion to the liveliest sallies. She was in the best humour in the world; the shore resounded with incessant peals of laughter; and the little mischance—as so often happens among good people—only served to draw them nearer to each other, to make of them more cordial friends.

The unlucky company was conducted by Baron H. into a little cove, which was shaded from the wind by the high shore

and an elder thicket, and here they dried their clothes a little in the evening sun. Yet, as Miss Greta said, they could not end their days in the cove.

"What is now to be done?" was the general question. They found themselves, in fact, in an inconvenient condition. Clara offered herself to run to Ramlösa and fetch a carriage. This Miss Greta emphatically forbade, because, as she asserted, Clara would run herself into a consumption: should they, wet through as they were, in this wind, in this dust, tread back their way on foot? To Miss Greta this drying method appeared more than doubtful; the company was in the greatest embarrassment. We, however, are not in the least so, for we hear already from afar the sound of horses' hoofs and the rattling of an ever-approaching carriage. Before long our friends perceived also this welcome noise. Baron H. sprang forward several paces, and cried with a loud voice, "Hey! hey! hallo! stop! stop!"

The traveller was none other than—Count Ludwig R. in his own particular person. How astonished he looked!—how politely he offered his magnificent landau; how the wet company and Clara seated themselves therein; how displeased the post-horses were with this additional fourfold burden; how the postilion consoled himself with the promise of a doubled amount of drink money,—all this leave I for the reader to picture to himself at pleasure.

The Countess Natalie was assiduously taking one of her singing-lessons, and Don Juan was transporting Nina and her with one of his wild ballads, as the unlucky company, attended by their deliverer, entered the room. Great was the excitement produced by the arrivals. At first astonishment, exclamations, questions, and general confusion; then general constraint, when Count Ludwig came forward. Nina turned pale as the Count, with more than his customary friendliness, approached her. A slight crimson of embarrassment tinged the cheeks of the Countess as she presented Don Juan to the new comer. Don Juan alone looked indifferent as somewhat negligently he returned an inquiring glance to the stiff bow of the Count.

We cannot, however, yet lose sight of our wet friends, for an extraordinary fate stands yet before them. How they were dried—how they drank elder-tea, and went early to bed

—how Filius, spite of all this, had a bad cold in his head, we will make so free as to pass over. On the contrary, we must mention that Miss Greta, on the day after the water ordeal—which, upon the whole, had only given a doubtful result—received an invitation from her aunt the Dowager Countess Nordstjerna, who lived at the distance of four-and-twenty hours, to visit her at her estate lying six English miles from Ramlösa. The card of invitation contained also the inquiry whether Miss Greta wished to be received in an “agreeable or a disagreeable manner:” to which Miss Greta immediately replied, “in a disagreeable manner.”

It grieves me not to have time enough to make my reader better acquainted with the Countess Nordstjerna, for I am convinced—let him be as anti-aristocratic as he may—that he would have great pleasure in it. A better-bred old lady one could not easily meet with; I mean by this, not so much well-bred and distinguished in regard to birth and behaviour, but much more in that *je ne sais quoi* which makes people the opposite of whatever is common, disagreeable, and rude, and speaks all the more of nobility of soul, of purity of manners, and an ever-undeviating goodness of heart. How amiable the old lady was! To have seen and known her belongs to my dearest recollections. She was amiable to high and low—I use these words in their customary signification—towards old and young—and enchanted young people especially by tasteful, merry exhibitions and intellectual inventions—by her benevolence and—and—I cannot find any word to express that anxiety which she had for the entertainment of others, and which caused her always to diffuse life and gaiety around her. She was also rich, and therefore in a condition to carry out and accomplish her ideas and wishes, and to collect around her all that made her happy. I see, my dear reader, that you fancy her already surrounded with artists and works of art,—with brilliant young people, and all the objects of luxury. No, no, dear reader,—behold exactly the reverse!—all, namely, that is ugly, poor, defenceless, and despised—

O ye genii, zephyrs, graces, loves! If you had but seen the seven ugly young ladies and the three lame widows—every one of them poor and forlorn—which she had assembled around her, I think you would have run away,—run away for

terror and horror! Harmony and Christian love, however, did not run away; they felt themselves extremely well placed in this select circle; and the ten planets circulated, after the example of the heavenly bodies, with order and clearness around their sun, the angelically good and serene Countess. In this sphere of uncommon ugliness and uncommon excellence, strangers were very gladly received, and it was also entered very gladly by them.

Miss Greta felicitated herself on this visit, and set off on the day appointed in the best humour, accompanied by Clara. Several unforeseen hindrances had prevented her setting out from Ramlösa earlier than afternoon; and she felt—as we do also—a little dissatisfaction in knowing that the Countess's roast veal and fritters would have been expecting her in vain for several hours. Baron H. drove his two friends with a deal of skill, and sang the while, in coachman fashion—but with little skill—a ballad, which somewhat annoyed Miss Greta. Baron H., however, possessed the little weakness of being pleased with his own false, bad singing.

The journey was prosperous; they arrived and alighted from the carriage. Miss Greta was received in the magnificent hall by the Nine Muses, who with Medusa-heads and extraordinary head-gear stood between the Corinthian pillars, and made, with the fire-tongs upon copper pans and kettles, such fearful music, brawling all the while a chorus of which our reader may very well dispense with the repetition. We can only assert that the party and the singing perfectly answered the accompaniment.

Miss Greta considered the music transportingly “disagreeable,” yet still the whole scene was tolerably flat, as much wanting in wit as novelty. She wondered that her wise aunt had hit upon such an unwise reception of her, and sighed with compassion over the old lady's declining powers of understanding.

In the mean time the hostess appeared so very much pleased to see her, so amiable and agreeable to those who accompanied her, and seemed herself so indescribably enchanted with the grotesque reception-solemnity which she had devised, that it was quite impossible not to be as lively as she was. Several strangers from the neighbourhood, both old and young, were assembled there, and made the company yet

more lively. They spent the evening in telling ghost-stories, and those the most horrible that they could possibly think of. The Countess, herself, described with the fullest amplification the ghosts which from time to time she had seen in her own castle. The history of a beautiful girl who two hundred years ago was married here in the night-time to the lord of the castle, and was then murdered by her vengeful mother, made a most shuddering impression upon all, especially when they were told that this midnight marriage-scene was always repeated on certain nights, and had been seen by various inhabitants of the castle.

“It seems,” said the Countess, “as if the lovers, by this means, would make known their defiance of, and their protestation against, the fearful treatment which had separated them on earth.”

Baron H. declared that he had always very much wished, for once, to see a ghost, and he should not have any objection, on that very night, to make some supernatural acquaintance. Miss Greta was silent.

At supper the farce was continued; and as Miss Greta, who had brought an excellent appetite with her, met with a variety of dishes, which in truth were no dishes at all, she laughed more and more constrainedly; when, however, an egg which she struck with her knife did not crack—because it was made of white marble—she ceased laughing altogether, gave up the attempt, and assumed a very serious countenance. They saw that she felt hurt.

Clara and the Baron, on the contrary, continued in the best of humours; they made a thousand jokes about the extraordinary dishes; Miss Greta only was annoyed; the hostess and the Nine Muses kept up one peal of laughter.

Miss Greta, however, was yet tried more severely, when on going to bed in the evening she lay on three real eggs, which had been hidden between the sheets, and in this manner made a most unpleasant dish of buttered eggs. She was actually angry, and poured forth a violent philippic on such-like “old-fashion stupidities,” into which she could not conceive how her aunt had fallen, and whose sense and taste she vowed to amend.

In the mean time Baron H. had to do battle with three cray-fish in his bed, which pinched him on hands and feet,

and left it by no means a mistake of his to call them "infamous canaille." After he had manœuvred them, with unspeakable trouble, into his pocket-handkerchief, his first thought was to throw them down into the court. As he, however, opened the window, a soft wind came in towards him, which found its way as it were to his very heart. It blew away his indignation against the ugly but innocent creatures, and it grieved him that they should die miserably in dry sand, whilst he himself slept comfortably in an easy bed. Softly he shut the window, as softly as if he had been about some crime, slipped on his great-coat, and sneaked through his door down stairs and into the garden. Here he paused, standing beside a brook with his little bundle in his hand. The cray-fish moved themselves significantly, not anticipating the hour of deliverance, because, from ancient times, with them man's hand and the hand of the executioner means the same thing. It was not without pleasure that the Baron heard his bedfellows fall into the water; and as he saw how the full moon mirrored herself in the clear waves, it was to him as if he saw the countenance of a good mother watching over her children. The pious wish arose in his heart, that peace reigned upon earth, and that not even a worm might be tormented.

Extraordinary! Did an angel hear his wish, and go to bear it to the Father of all being? For exactly at that very moment, a white-veiled female figure glided thence among the trees and vanished. Baron H. wished to observe her more nearly; he hastened after her, saw her one moment, lost sight of her the next, and plunged into a morass. Here he almost fell upon his nose, and determined therefore to return to his chamber. Arrived there, he found himself heated and without the least inclination to sleep. The moonlight invited him to a midnight walk, and yet the company, which it was possible he might encounter, did not quite satisfy him. He closed his chamber window, and lighted his candles.

Baron H. belonged to that class of character which is not willingly alone. His joyous, philanthropic temperament required sympathy. A confidential evening talk with good friends was preferable to him to comfortable sleep. This necessity for companionship he felt to-night more vividly than ever. He missed his Filius, who had remained behind under

the protection of the Countess. Miss Greta's want of good-humour during the past evening depressed him. He would have given a good deal, at this moment, to have chatted with her, and to have been able to hear her hearty laughter, which, as well as the sight of her white teeth, always did him so much good—to have looked only for a minute into Clara's bright eyes would have made him happy. Thinking how impossible all this was, at that present time, the Baron heaved two deep sighs. An extraordinary echo answered them immediately behind him. He turned himself quickly round, but all was still and vacant in the chamber. The thing seemed very strange, and yet not altogether disagreeable, because it had something sociable in it. He now sighed intentionally; no answer,—he coughed, sneezed—in vain. All remained silent, to his great annoyance. Out of humour, he laid himself in bed, and extinguished the light.

No *tête-à-tête* in the world could be so interesting to the listener as that between a man and his pillow. He confides to it his most secret thoughts, his silent wishes, his untold love, his hidden follies. Happy he whose last thought is of a beloved being, on whose faithful breast he slumbers; happy he whose last waking thought raises itself to God, because he reposes in his bosom.

We need not have any fear of imparting to the reader the thoughts of the Baron, in this *tête-à-tête* with his pillow; they were worthy of a good man. After they had elevated themselves for some moments to heaven, they turned again to earth, in order to seek out the best companionship.—N.B. That is to say, if she be good—a companionship which the Baron had desired for a long time, that of a wife. Baron H. thought so zealously at this time on such a one, she stood so livingly before him, that he could not resist heaving a deep sigh, and uttering the exclamation:

“Ah! my beloved, my beloved, beloved Gre——”

He was suddenly interrupted by a spectral voice, which exclaimed:

“Gustav H.! Gustav H.! Gustav H.!”

“What's amiss?” demanded the Baron somewhat indignantly, starting up at the same time with a very uncomfortable feeling.

“Come and see!” answered the voice.

A slight shudder passed through the Baron, as by the feeble light which a round opening in his window-shutter admitted into his chamber, he saw the white-veiled female figure at a few paces from his bed. Of fear the Baron knew nothing, and a ghost in the form of a lady had nothing terrible in it for him. He bethought himself for a moment, and again the apparition exclaimed slowly, "Come and see! follow me!"

"I will have the honour of doing so," said the Baron.

He sprang hastily from his bed, dressed himself quickly, and followed his guide, who silently and shadow-like floated before him through desolate chambers and long galleries. The ramble appeared somewhat long to him; he thought it necessary, therefore, to inquire rather boldly, but at the same time in a polite manner, what might be the object of it.

"Have not a fear—question me not!" replied the shade with a deep low voice.

We must just now leave these wanderers for a moment, in order to look after Miss Greta.

We left her at the time when she had become angry. It commonly happened on such occasions that perhaps an angry word was forced from her, at which she herself was obliged to laugh. Now, as everybody knows laughter and ill-humour are sworn foes, and whenever the first took hold of Miss Greta, the second always drove it away; so happened it at this time. After several witty outbreaks, she became reconciled to the world and its "stupidities," and went to bed in the hope of forgetting in sound sleep the foolish supper and the marble eggs, etc., etc. Clara, whose bed stood opposite to hers on the other side of the chamber, was already fast asleep when Miss Greta closed her eyes. Quickly, however, did she open them again; for a dull noise, with certain whiskings-about and flutterings, together with low clatterings, approached her ear.

An alarm-drum had excited far less terror than this unearthly whisking and clattering. She started up quickly in her bed; the whisking-about and sweeping sounds continued. She was quite hot.

"Clara!" exclaimed she with an almost inarticulate voice. "Clara, do you hear nothing?"

But Clara heard nothing; she slept soundly, and her uncommonly deep breathing proved that. Miss Greta was

courageous as far as men and animals were concerned, and she would have faced at all times any actual danger boldly and with self-possession; the most unpleasant moments of life would not have been able to make her pusillanimous; but night—darkness—silence—emptiness—and the invisible shapes of dread—ah! dear reader, all these, we must confess, were quite enough to make Miss Greta almost a coward. Notwithstanding all this, she felt, as she heard these odd whiskings-about and clatterings, more vexation than fear.

“The bewitched old nest!” said she, “sweep it out, however, by daylight! It is quite horrible! Never in all my life will I come here again!”

Scarcely had she said these words, when a rumbling noise in one corner of the room drew her eyes thither. O horror! Miss Greta saw three little black figures, one after another, ascend from the floor. Drops of terror stood on her forehead. “Clara!” cried she with an almost stifled voice—but Clara slept on. The little black figures began now to bow themselves, as if they would salute her; then hopped towards the bed and exclaimed with hoarse voices, “Good day! good day! good day!”

Quite out of breath, and yet in order not to be uncivil, Miss Greta replied, “Good day, good day, good day!—that means good night! adieu! Clara!”

Clara was fast asleep,—Clara heard nothing. Miss Greta was desperate; she rang the bell violently. With that the black Kobolds hopped about all the brisker, set themselves in a row, bowed and whispered, “All is ready! follow us!”

“No, I thank you!” replied Miss Greta, “I have not time—not now—I come to-morrow! adieu, adieu!”

“You *must* follow us!” answered the fiends, and approached the bed.

“What would you?” cried Miss Greta in the highest excitement; “go your way! In the name of heaven, be off with you!”

The black fiends stood now by the bed, and looked as if they were about to mount upon it.

Les extrêmes se touchent. Great fear has more than once produced real heroism. It is a shame that the great generals do not write their confessions. Their first battles would make us acquainted with odd things. Despair gives birth to

the courage of heroes. Miss Greta gave a proof of this. Driven to the utmost, and as angry as she was terrified, her benumbed energies awoke at once. In the necessity of self-preservation she felt about her for some weapon of offence or defence, and caught the handle of a short warming-pan. Woe to you, ye black ones! Such sturdy blows on the head never had been dealt about—never did ghost cry out more dolefully;—never was a flight quicker, especially before a weapon of tin! Miss Greta followed the flying, and struck about her with blind fury. The black ones speedily collected themselves in the corner, where they had risen from the floor, and began again to descend. Here again also Miss Greta struck them on the head, and they vanished with an outcry and rumbling sound, which had nothing at all of the spirit-world in it. Miss Greta in her zeal certainly would have pursued the fiends into the lower region, had not her victorious footsteps been suddenly stayed by discovering that the place at which they had vanished was nothing more than an open entrance into a kitchen, and that the narrow steep steps by which they had stumbled down were not at all inviting. Besides which there ascended from the hole not the slightest vapour of brimstone and infernal fire, but such a savoury smell of potatoes and salt meat, that she gave up all thoughts of ghosts and shades of the lower world. Her ideas took quite another direction, and she pulled the bell so violently that the cord came down into her hand. This, and the circumstance that, spite of all her ringing, the house continued as quiet as death, increased her anger still more. She hastened to Clara's bed with her warming-pan on her shoulder, shook her, anything but gently, and exclaimed:

“Clara, are you dead? Are you bewitched? Will you sleep till the day of judgment? Clara, wake! Now—thank heaven!—get up I pray you, and dress yourself quickly. Don't ask me many questions, but be quick!”

Clara did immediately as her friend desired; and whilst Miss Greta dressed herself she replied to Clara's questions only by incoherent violent exclamations.

“Stupidities! They shall of a truth give me account for all this!—they positively shall not disturb me again in my sleep—I will soon let them see—idiotic jokes!”

The two friends were soon dressed. They left their cham-

ber ready to rouse the whole house, and to receive every ghost that should approach them with blows of the warming-pan.

O Fate, how remarkably dost thou bring things together ; how odd thy ways are ! In thy midnight blindman's-buff gambols how one is thrown about between friend and foe without being able to recognise anything. One stumbles about blindly ; to escape the rain gets into the gutter ; flies from Scylla only to fall into Charybdis.

Scarcely had Miss Greta and Clara entered the long corridor into which their chamber opened, than a white shadow floated towards them. Miss Greta elevated her fearful weapon. With a cry of horror the shade fled ; but now—O all ye demons !—a dark gigantic mass advanced, which seemed to fill the whole corridor, and inevitably barred the way against them. Miss Greta thought on the Minotaur, and aimed a blow at the monster with her elevated weapon. A low groan, to which was added a curse in a deep bass voice, followed : “ Who dares to give me such a cursed blow ? ” added the voice.

Miss Greta shuddered, and in the same moment felt herself disarmed and taken captive. A powerful hand grasped her arm, and the same threatening voice continued :

“ Hear you, my dear ! the joke goes beyond all bounds. A goblin that deals such blows as that, and with heaven knows what kind of weapon, must not be at all astonished if it be handled roughly, and like a captive of war—*allons !* march to trial.”

Miss Greta was silent, perhaps intentionally, in order to give some *éclat* to the affair ; but Clara exclaimed quite beside herself :

“ Baron H., Baron H., it is Miss Greta ! ”

“ Miss Greta ! ” returned the Baron in inexpressible astonishment as he slowly let go the arm which he had grasped, “ my gracious lady—I must confess—hm, hm—my stomach—I must confess I never could have supposed that you would have the design of knocking me on the head. And Clara—but how in heaven's name !—explain it to me ?—I acknowledge, ladies——”

“ Let us defer acknowledgments and explanations, Baron,” said Miss Greta, somewhat warmly ; “ and if you really are

Baron H., and not a spectre, conduct us to lights and people, or do you go and bring people and lights here, if there be such in this bewitched house."

"A spectre!" exclaimed the Baron, some little offended—"a spectre! I wish I had been one just now, and then I might have escaped the blow with this cursed thing! What! I really believe it is a bed-warmer. When, in heaven's name I pray you, did it ever happen that people struck about them with warming-pans?"

Miss Greta's disposition to laughter was put to a hard trial by this speech of the Baron; but annoyed by the adventures of the night, she repressed her gaiety, and said seriously, "I beseech of you, Baron, let us for the present forget all this, and conduct us to somebody. I must see lights and people, otherwise I shall become quite ill."

At that very moment a door slowly opened at the further end of the corridor, through which they saw the glimmer of a bluish light. Indescribably sweet music was heard; and beautiful voices, accompanied by softened tones of an organ, sang a solemn anthem. Astonishment and delight overcame the three.

"If that be a goblin, it is at least an agreeable one," said Miss Greta; "we will go nearer."

Baron H. discovered immediately that his entire politeness had returned; he offered his arm to the ladies, and conducted them towards the spot whence proceeded the light and the music. At the end of the corridor they unawares found themselves in a sort of trellised *loge*, from which, with surprise, they witnessed the following scene. They looked down into a large vaulted chapel, dimly but beautifully lighted, the walls of which were hung with dark red velvet, from whose rich folds gleamed forth old arms and old pictures, representing scenes from the sufferings of Christ. The seats in the chapel were empty; but before the altar, which was ornamented with two tall silver branch-lights, stood a venerable priest in an old-fashioned surplice. He stood so immovably that he resembled rather a statue than a living man. The organ sounded low; the invisible singers poured forth a harmonious Gloria.

The whole was wonderfully beautiful, yet unearthly; it resembled the worship of shades. Presently the scene be-

came more animated, without losing however thereby any of its ghostlike appearances. Slowly and silently an extraordinary procession entered the church. Pale and beautiful, in the picturesque dress of the noble ladies of the sixteenth century, and conducted by an elderly stiff-jewelled dame—as one sees them in old family pictures of that time—floated in a young maiden. Two richly-adorned bridemaids followed her; then came two stately knights, the one young, the other old, both of them in magnificent marriage dresses; and behind them came two young cavaliers. The young maiden and the young knight separated themselves from the procession, and stopped before the altar; around which the others, slowly, noiselessly, and with silent gravity, formed themselves into a half-circle. They all looked as if they had lain for many long years in their graves; yet still in the eyes of the bridal pair there burned that fire which death was not able to extinguish, nor the grave to cool. As the lovers stood before the altar, the old priest seemed suddenly to become animated; and when the singing ceased, performed, with a deep solemn voice, the marriage ceremony.

Miss Greta listened with breathless attention to catch the names of the bridal couple, but in vain; they were spoken so low that they did not reach her ear. It seemed to her, nevertheless, as if their features were not unknown to her. When the marriage ceremony was ended, the beautiful music again sounded. Baron H. and Clara, both connoisseurs in music, were in the third heaven. Miss Greta also was affected, and felt herself ever more and more transported by this lovely spectacle, which appeared to her every moment to have less and less of the ghostly about it.

The three were so completely occupied by what had gone on before them, that they never thought of speaking to each other of the scene in the corridor. But now the procession, silently and slowly, left the church, as it had entered; the music pealed forth its sweet harmonies. Soon all was still and desolate—the very light itself of the lamps seemed to pale. A feeling of the supernatural came over Miss Greta.

“Do not let us stop here, dear Baron,” said she, “till the lamps are extinguished. I consider it no pleasure at all to sit here in darkness among these old knights.”

“We have weapons with us,” replied he laconically, and

lifted up the warming-pan, which he had held between his legs.

"My dearest Baron," answered Miss Greta, turning towards him her handsome, merry face, "I must——"

But Miss Greta must suddenly break off, for all at once dancing-music caught her ear.

"What the thousand!" cried Baron H. full of animation, and tried to open the door of the corridor, but—it was locked, vain attempt to open it—it yielded not.

"I do not see," said Miss Greta, "why we should make such violent assaults on that door—here is yet another;" and as she said this, a door, which had hitherto been concealed by the folds of the red silk curtain, yielded to her hand.

Our friends saw themselves suddenly transported into a magnificently-lighted saloon, at the lower end of which, and under a canopy of velvet, sate the bride and bridegroom, whilst round them stood in a half-circle the other members of the procession. In the middle of the hall splendid ladies and gentlemen performed the torch-dance—not of that kind, however, over which one gapes for whole hours in the palace at Stockholm, but the true, primeval dance, as it is danced in the Indian sacrificial nights, full of life and variety, and consecrated to Siva.*

In the dimly-lighted part of the hall in which our friends found themselves, they perceived three arm-chairs. They seated themselves and looked on the brilliant show. Miss Greta very soon discovered in the torch-dance several of the Nine Muses, whose talent for singing she had duly estimated on the past evening. She believed also that she detected her aunt in the old lady who conducted the bride to the altar; and very soon she had no longer any doubt as to the company in which she found herself.

Baron H. felt himself, in the mean time, as if electrified; he started up, seized the torch from the hand of one of the cavaliers, and began to dance himself, whilst with great zeal and comic gravity he strove to keep the others in order; in this, however, he did not succeed, for the astonishment he excited occasioned very soon indescribable laughter, which dissipated

* Should any of the learned wish to commence a disputation with us on the mode of the torch-dance, we answer on the subject—nothing.

all order and attention. Before long, however, these both returned, and how astonished was Baron H. as he suddenly saw Miss Greta with a torch in her hand dancing opposite to him as his partner! It excited in both of them the greatest delight to observe their hasty midnight toilet, which made such a whimsical contrast with that of all those who surrounded them. The hearty and unrestrained laughter of the others animated them only the more. They were carried away by a wild rage of dancing, swung themselves round in circles, and made rounds, chains, mill-wheels, and the most extravagant vagaries. The other dancers followed their example; the ball became more and more lively; more and more general. Bride and bridegroom stood up to dance; the old knight and the old noble lady stood up to dance; all danced and laughed. It was a passion, a rapture, a frenzy, a confusion. Even the music was as if seized by witchcraft—it played as if it were possessed. Oberon winded his horn.

Clara only partook not the general joy. Neither accustomed to the life of the great world, nor to the facility with which its *habitués* act their part in it, she could not comprehend the dancing-frenzy of her two friends. Notwithstanding the tranquillizing words which Miss Greta whispered to her at the moment when she rose to mingle in the dance, Clara felt so distressed and so confounded by this extraordinary scene, that she was unable to restrain her tears. The early part of the night lay disturbingly and bewilderingly in her mind; she did not understand it; she did not understand the world and the people that surrounded her. She could not reconcile herself to the sight of her friend dancing there in her nightcap with a torch in her hand. It seemed to her like folly, like insanity, and, as if driven by an irresistible impulse, she herself mingled among the dancers with the intention of taking Miss Greta's hand and drawing her away from the whirlpool. Yet now was Clara herself drawn into it; they seized her by her hand, drew her into the dance, and she, like all the rest, made rounds, chains, mill-wheels, and so on. Clara danced, wept, laughed, lost her head and—her shoe. The torches blazed and sparkled before her eyes; she sees Baron H.; he too blazes and sparkles, for his coat-laps are on fire! Dear reader, do not cast reproachful glances

on the light in Clara's hand, for I protest to thee that this conflagration had not its origin in her!

On first perceiving a heat in his back, the Baron took a great leap in the air; his second movement was to throw himself on the threatened and already suffering part on the floor with such force as to make the walls shake.

"Fire! fire!" cried several.

"Water! water!" cried others.

"Clara!" cried Miss Greta with a loud voice, as she now saw her danger.

The flames from the Baron had seized upon Clara, and now were consuming her light dress. But others also shared in the same fate; the fire caught in all directions, and one ribbon, one gauze handkerchief, one ball-dress after another, became its prey. Clara sank senseless in the arms of her friend, who resolutely embraced her, and held her, burning, closely pressed to her. The burning dancers sprang screaming about the hall. The torches were thrown away; the fire seized on the window-curtains, and then on the drapery of the walls!

Death and the devil! what a sight! what a cry! Fire! fire! water! water! Moment of despair! moment of noble revenge! Baron H. started up; seized the warming-pan, which he had disposed of in a corner of the hall, and emptied it over Miss Greta, who had already succeeded in extinguishing the flames which menaced Clara. Indignant at the unnecessary shower-bath, Miss Greta could not avoid saying, even in this moment of universal confusion, "Before you sprinkle people, do look and see whether it be necessary!"

Miss Greta had justice on her side—there was no longer necessity for it in her case; but Baron H. had been deceived by his terror and his noble zeal. And the other unfortunate, screaming, and burning people—are they to perish unaided? Good Providence! Two folding doors sprang open, and exhibited a sideboard on which stood bowls, bottles, glasses, and plates. O punch, bishop, cardinal, and almond-milk, hard is your fate! Instead of being tasted by knowing palates, and duly prized by them, must you serve to quench other flames than those of thirst? But necessity demands—the liquor streams forth, the bowls are emptied. Ladies become faint—streams of eau de Cologne, universal remedy!

animate and console; ices are brought in—people cool and refresh themselves; people ask questions, and get information; they offer congratulations, and laugh; the goblin visitation and the wedding are both explained—that was fiction, this reality. Bride and bridegroom are introduced; people recognise them, and offer felicitations; in one word, there is nothing but joy and joviality. Only between the Baron H. and Miss Greta the double scene with the warm-water pan produced an atmosphere *à la glace*, which threatened to expand itself into an icy sea between them.

After all these scenes, the sleep of our friends was not the most tranquil, and repeatedly exclaimed they in their dreams —“ Fire! fire! water! water!”

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LAST ORDEAL.

After debauch, headache; after study, weariness; after bride, wife.

The Watch-tower in Kootven.

AFTER storm, calm; after the deluge, the olive-branch; after trial, certainty; after a dinner, digestion; after noon-day, evening. Here pause we. It is evening. Miss Greta sate in a bower of blossoming lindens. She was alone, and was busied in quartering and sugaring oranges for Clara's supper, who was gone with a party to Höganäs. The greater part of the company at the bath were of the party; Miss Greta in the mean time, who thought the day too hot, remained behind at home. The descending sun shone with his last rays upon the beautiful fruit and the white hands which were busied with it. Miss Greta enjoyed the fine evening, and praised the Lord who had made all things so well. Recollections of the lately-occurred adventures passed now and then through her mind. Now she contracted her eyebrows together, and now a merry and good-humoured smile played about her finely-cut mouth.

Quite unexpectedly Baron H. stepped into the arbour, yet with such an uncommonly grave countenance that all the merriment vanished from Miss Greta's face. Baron H. seated himself upon the bench on which she sate, but as far as possible from her, and kept an obstinate silence. This placed

her in some degree of embarrassment; she asked several indifferent questions, which were answered short, on which once more silence ensued.

“I leave to-morrow,” said he.

“Indeed!” replied Miss Greta.

“I have endeavoured for the last time,” continued he, “to prevail upon Clara to alter her views of life and marriage. But it is in vain—at least I am not the one who has the power to persuade her, and I confess I have seen this for a long time.”

“Nobody has had any presentiment of that,” thought Miss Greta.

“And now that I have obtained perfect certainty on this point,” said he, “I wish as soon as possible to leave a place in which not only old acquaintance themselves, but the very elements also seem to have sworn to torment me with trials which I have no longer any desire to undergo, and which perhaps as I conjecture were no otherwise designed from the beginning than to remove me.”

Baron H. rivetted with these words a keen glance on Miss Greta, who industriously strewed a piece of orange with sugar and offered it to him. He declined it with a movement of the head, and continued:

“In the mean time, I have in fact such a true friendship for Clara—such a fatherly sentiment—if I may so express it—that it is impossible to me to give up the design of a near relationship with this good, pure being.”

“How will that be,” thought Miss Greta; “is Filius then perhaps to marry her?”

“I have—I wish—” continued the Baron with bashful confusion—“I intended to invest a capital for Clara, the interest of which she should enjoy yearly from this time, and which should enable her henceforward to live independently. After my death, she shall have the right of disposing of it according to her own judgment; till then I wish to be her guardian, and I can assure her that she would have difficulty in finding a truer or better. I now beg of you to persuade Clara to permit me to gratify in this way a sentiment for her which I so heartily cherish. Beg of her to bless that wealth which Heaven has sent to me, and that indeed by permitting me to divide it with her. Beg of her, for mine or for God’s

sake, whichever will operate best—to accept it from me! Beg of her that she will think of me with friendship—that she will feel a little kindness towards me; or no!—do not speak to her of that—that must be as it may or can—but beg of her——”

“It will be impossible for me to remember so many prayers, dear Baron,” said Miss Greta, suddenly interrupting him—“they are longer than the Lord’s Prayer.”

“Well, then, say to her only that she must not refuse to show kindness to a sincere friend; tell her that if she rejects my prayer, I must believe that she hates me.”

Baron H. took his pocket handkerchief. Miss Greta’s tearful eyes and their expression contrasted strangely with the tone in which she said:

“Do you fear, in fact, Baron H., that I would let her die of hunger?”

“God forbid!” exclaimed he, horrified. “I am convinced that Clara is as well off with you as in the house of her mother—nay, indeed, better, according to all I have heard of her mother. But who can foresee all chances which may happen—marriage, death, and such like? And then——”

“You speak of *my* marriage, of *my* death, dear Baron—is it not so, of my death?”

“God defend you and all of us from such misfortune! but, but——”

“Good, Baron. But then have you not at the same time confidence in my sound reason. I have long since provided for Clara’s future.”

“That may be the case; but it is no reason why I should give up my intention. A double security is better than a single one.”

Miss Greta paused for a moment, and then replied kindly, but gravely:

“To speak sincerely, Baron,” said she, “I consider your generosity superfluous, and think it better that Clara depend alone upon me.”

“That is egotistical of you, Miss Greta,” said he.

“It may be so, Baron H.; I feel the subject in this way—and I tell you quite candidly, I can neither promise to convey your wishes to Clara, nor say to her that prudently she could fulfil them.”

"That is somewhat hard and extraordinary," exclaimed Baron H., reddening with displeasure; "you have for a long time called me your friend, and yet for long have you, as my enemy, done everything to prevent my happiness."

"This accusation is hard, Baron H.," said Miss Greta, affected, "and would touch me nearer if I felt that it were true."

"You have," continued he with yet greater warmth, "prevented my union with the only being whom I ever truly loved——"

"And this being?" interrupted she in a constrained voice.

"Is yourself," returned the Baron with increasing emotion. "You have—I am convinced of this, laboured, on the contrary, to bring about my union with a young person whom I highly esteem, and whose hand might have made me happy. You oppose yourself at this moment to the fulfilling of my dearest wishes—that of being able to do something for her benefit. You have for ten years shown yourself on every opportunity my actual enemy—have set yourself against all my plans and all my happiness, and will still certainly not——"

"Go on, Baron—'and will still certainly not——?'"

"Certainly not, to weaken my reproach for enmity—certainly will not take the care for my happiness into your own hands——?"

"Yes!" answered Miss Greta, while she peeled an orange.

"What?"

"Yes, I say."

"Do I hear aright?"

"Yes!"

"You will?"

"Yes!"

"Accept my hand?"

"Yes!"

"Become my wife?"

"Yes!"

"Is it earnest?"

"If you continue to doubt it any longer, I shall begin to say no!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the Baron, pale, and with

tears in his eyes as he seized her hands, "is it not a dream? Shall I really be so happy? Can you love me?"

"Baron!" said Miss Greta, mildly, and deeply moved, "I have been a longer time kindly disposed to you than—than I have any desire to confess."

"And you will become my wife!" cried the enraptured Baron, rising and giving a leap for joy; "you will be my wife, my friend for my whole life; but quickly—in a month?"

"Not so quickly, Baron. Besides this, all is not yet said. Hear and consider. My consent is knit up with two conditions."

"Speak! speak!"

"I will always keep Clara with me as now, or at least so long as she herself desires it."

"Certainly, certainly—that of course. She shall be our child. I will love her——"

"Only not too well, I must beg! Now for my second condition."

"Well?"

"I will know who are the parents of Filius."

Baron H. looked astonished and almost in despair.

"Never!" stammered he.

"I will know it, Baron!"

"That cannot possibly be your serious intention. You cannot lay so much stress upon so trifling a thing."

"I will know it, Baron!"

"Greta!"

"Gustav, I will know it!"

"Never!" exclaimed the Baron, in the highest excitement, and darted from the arbour.

Miss Greta sate for a long time immovable, her hand upon her forehead, and sunk in deep thought. A low rustling was heard behind the arbour—a motion which seemed to bring with it a cold wind; a dark body, which stood between Miss Greta and the entrance of the arbour, occasioned her to lift up her eyes. She was astonished and terrified as she saw before her that ghost-like lady, dressed in deep mourning, who had at a former time come before her and had excited her attention, but much more that of the Baron. She stood now immovable; two large almost extinguished eyes gleamed in their dark sockets; pale roses of the grave tinted the

hollow cheeks, and traces of long sufferings exhibited themselves around the faded mouth. The whole figure seemed about to sink into the grave.

Miss Greta thought involuntarily on the Ancestress in Grillpazer's tragedy of that name, and was very near saying, "Why dost thou fix that stony gaze upon me?"

With the almost transparent emaciated hand laid upon the sunken breast, the dark form approached Miss Greta.

"Do you know me yet?" inquired she.

"No," replied Miss Greta.

"You once knew me," said the dark form, "but it is many years since. I am the daughter of Baron H.'s sister. Leo is—my son—yet—he ought not to have been so!"

Miss Greta observed her in silence, and endeavoured to recal her features.

The stranger proceeded in broken sentences, which she spoke only with difficulty.

"The father of the boy sleeps in the grave—I shall soon follow him. My uncle has done every possible thing to conceal my error, and to stand in the place of father to my son. I wished to see my child and my uncle yet once more before my death; and for this purpose I am come here from a foreign country. His care has provided an asylum there for me, and thither I shall return without clasping them to my heart—I do not deserve it. This has caused me to hear that which has just passed between my uncle and yourself. He, the excellent one, shall not suffer through me. Therefore I now stand here and acknowledge my shame. Farewell! make him happy, and be silent on what you have heard and seen. Let him never dream that the unfortunate Cecilia has been so near to him; let him never know that my secret is known to you—it would disturb his peace. Farewell for ever!"

She made a parting movement with her hand, and withdrew.

Miss Greta rose hastily and went after her. "Shall not I see you again?" asked she.

"Not on earth!" replied the bowed one. "In an hour's time I shall be far hence. Do not follow me. Farewell!"

With this an elderly lady came forth from among the shrubs, gave her her arm, and both walked off slowly.

Miss Greta followed them with her eyes till they vanished behind the trees. She felt as if she had seen an apparition; but the unearthly sorrowful impression was strongly mingled with a comfortable feeling, and she saw the glory of a saint around the head of the Baron. She could not, however, resign herself for long to her observations, because she was again disturbed. It was the little Filius, who came to inquire after his father. She called the boy to her. He glanced at her distrustfully; but Miss Greta looked so kind that at last he took courage and went to her. She placed him on her knee, and stroked his cheeks and his bright locks, whilst she resigned herself to the most agreeable thoughts of the boy and his foster-father. Filius looked askance at the oranges.

At the same moment the Baron returned, seated himself by Miss Greta and the boy, and said with great emotion:

"It is impossible that it can be your serious meaning. It is impossible that you will sacrifice my happiness, and as I know, to a certain degree, your own also, to a whim, to childishness, to an outbreak of curiosity——"

"Whim, childishness, curiosity or not, all as one," said Miss Greta, "tell me if it be your serious intention, rather to renounce my hand than satisfy my curiosity, and tell me who are the parents of the boy!"

"I *cannot*, I *will* not tell it, let it cost what it may," said the Baron, depressed, yet with determination.

"Very well, then," returned Miss Greta with a dignified cordiality that became her uncommonly well, "if you positively cannot tell me who his mother was, I at least will show who for the future she shall be."

With these words she embraced Filius, lifted him up, and kissed him with a warmth which the boy immediately returned. The Baron, who wept for joy, threw his arms around them both.

"The curtain falls," is commonly said in dramas when the author has succeeded in uniting all his characters in the last scene in a general embrace; and it is said so here also; for the highest joy of man, as well as his deepest sorrow, is only for the eyes of angels. But if we let the curtain fall, it must only be for a moment. We shall draw it up again directly, in order to present a little afterpiece, which is called—

CHAPTER XXII.

MISS GRETA'S ANXIETIES.

THE piece opens on the evening of the same day. Scene—Miss Greta's bedroom. Miss Greta feels herself, against her own will, in great disquiet. She wishes to confess to Clara what has happened, but does not rightly know how to do this, and what the effect of it may be. That word "to confess," as regards any affairs of her own, does not please her. For the first time in her life, she feels embarrassed and almost without courage. She snuffs the candles, coughs, puts things in their places, is hasty and uncertain in all her movements. Clara seems to remark nothing; an uncommon liveliness animates her whole being. She seems determined to talk incessantly of Baron H., which occasions Miss Greta great anxiety of heart, because she thinks that Clara has begun to incline to him and marriage.

CLARA. So much is certain, and I think one is convinced of it every day more and more, that there is an infinite great deal of good in the world.

MISS GRETA. O yes!—but—certainly there are both good and bad.

CLARA. Yes; but the good far outweighs the bad. The better one comes to know mankind, the more one sees that every one has his advantages which make him worthy of esteem. Every one in fact has his pound of heaven's wealth. This pound, this goodness in man, seems to me like his good angel, which continually draws him towards goodness. Baron H. has taught me not to judge by the surface. For a long time I considered him bad; as one who only troubled himself to find out the faults of his fellow-creatures to ridicule them. Now, I know that he is witty; but, at the same time, much more good-humoured than witty. He loves mankind, although he knows their failings. He would like best to do good to all. Besides, he laughs just as much at himself as at others; and then what a beautiful earnestness is there with this in his soul!

MISS GRETA. Hm!

CLARA. I am convinced that Baron H. unites with his

joyous temper the most estimable qualities. He seems to me to be one of the few with whom one might boldly venture on a journey through life.

MISS GRETA. Hm! hm!

CLARA. He certainly would make the wife happy who knew rightly how to take him.

MISS GRETA. Uf! uf! It is astonishingly sultry here.

CLARA. And what a joy it must be, to contribute anything to the happiness of so good and amiable a man!

MISS GRETA, *aside*. O heavens! that goes too far. *Aloud*. Yes, certainly; but how can any one be certain of making the happiness of any one?

CLARA. Oh, that is easily felt. If I had a friend who loved the Baron, I would counsel her with pleasure as quick as possible to have the marriage, and her happiness should be mine.

MISS GRETA, *who can no longer contain herself*. Clara! tell me boldly out—are you in love with any one?

CLARA. I am not; but——

MISS GRETA. But—but? ——Will you speak quickly, child?

CLARA, *embracing her*. But I am convinced that you are a little, and——

MISS GRETA. Don't strangle me for it! Clara, forgive me! I am irritable—I am anxious—and you—you make a jest of it.

CLARA. Allow me to finish my sentence, and embrace you.

MISS GRETA, *with tears in her eyes*. Do as you will, Clara.

CLARA. Very well, then! I finish thus. I am convinced—or rather, I know—that Baron H. loves you again; that he has loved you for a long time.

MISS GRETA. That was well said, Clara! And you are convinced of it, Clara? You are glad of it, Clara?

CLARA. I? right heartily glad; because you are worthy of each other, and will make each other mutually happy. I only wish I could give you both a clear idea of that which you feel.

MISS GRETA. I cannot possibly receive the accusation of having no clear idea of that which I feel. And in order to convince you of the contrary, and to show you how wrong you are, offer me your congratulations, Clara—I am betrothed to Baron H. I pray you, do not look so confounded; do not

let your arms hang as if they were of lead. Throw them round my neck; your embrace is more in place now than before, and it is the dearest necklace which I ever possessed or will possess. There! that is right, there! Now see you, my Clara, my naughty girl, if it should so happen that you feel less kindly towards me on account of this marriage, or that you think you shall be less comfortable in my house—then, do you see, I'll end it all at once on the spot.

CLARA. No, no! never! Have no fear! I shall be happy in your happiness. I shall love the Baron——

MISS GRETA, *interrupting her*. Softly, softly. I give to both the Baron and you a dispensation from all vows of mutual love. I shall be perfectly well pleased if you are agreed in this, in loving *me*. I, for my part, will do all that I can to hold you to the fulfilling of this duty. Tell me, Clara, that you do not consider it too difficult.

CLARA, *with a full heart*. It is the pleasantest, the dearest, which will be laid upon me in life.

The curtain falls.

CHAPTER XXIII.

PICTURES.

She went in the grove, to the red-rose bush;
The nightingale sang in the evening's hush.

Swedish Popular Song.

THESE pictures are not fine—are not beautiful; they bear no resemblance to those which in the past winter delighted court and city. Besides this, I have not the heart to jest—nay, dear reader, thou mayest believe me; on the contrary, I kindle my lamp with the greatest unwillingness, and only to honour Truth, for my soul is troubled.

It is even so with Nature. It is a hot summer's day. A grey, cloudy heaven oppresses the yellow, dry earth. Silence reigns in the trees; silence in the air; silence in the region of the clouds. All is so languid—so languid. Languidly hum the gnats; languidly hang the flowers; languidly and pantingly do the animals hang their heads; languidly lie the cockchafers on the sapless leaves; languidly glances the sun through the vapour, and burns even in setting.

The company at the bath are out on a rural excursion.

Nina alone has remained at home. She has headache, and at her own desire has she been left alone. Towards evening she felt better, and went out, to seek for coolness. A sort of melancholy insensibility clouds her mind, and she steps languidly through the vaporous neighbourhood. She followed the rushing of a little waterfall, and went towards it instinctively in the hope of being refreshed by it.

Freshly sparkled the silver waves; green and flowery were the banks. Nina laid herself down upon the soft, velvet turf; her hand played with the waters; her eye followed their course: she saw how they flowed, idly, restlessly, without knowing whence they came or whither they went. Dark feelings and thoughts on the mysteries of Nature passed through her soul, which shook like a flower in the evening wind. She let it be shaken; she felt herself better; the air had here something refreshing in it. The deadness of her spirit seemed passing away; tears of melancholy pleasure shone in her eyes, and the longing after happiness and life swelled in her breast.

She perceived then not far from her the tones of a guitar. The leaves concealed the singer, but Nina recognised the melodious voice of Don Juan.

Nina, fly, fly! Wherefore dost thou not fly, inconsiderate one?

Nina's first feeling was to rise and leave the spot, but an incomprehensible magic fettered her mind, and she had not power enough to overcome it. She lingered, and he sang in loving, melting tones:

Love, it is the soul of nature,
And the breath of life is love;
Flowers their fleeting odours mingle
In the field and in the grove.

Birds pour forth from leafy branches
Many a love-ecstatic song;
Little brooks of true love babbling
Steal the flowery vales along.

Seest thou how one tender leaflet
On its heart another warms?
O how lovingly embracing
Rest they in each other's arms!

Thus refresh themselves all natures,
Thus themselves in love rejoice;
Canst thou then, thou fairest maiden,
Pause ere thou make love thy choice!

Come and taste and know what love is!
Love will by his word abide;
Follow then thy bosom's impulse,
Maiden, do not turn aside!

The song ceased. Why did not Nina fly? The singer lies at her feet. Here he made known his love in glowing sighs. He said to her the tenderest things, and made the most passionate declarations to her. Deeply and powerfully was Nina's soul seized upon. She saw herself worshipped; she believed herself beloved; yet she feared that which she felt; she wished to fly, but Don Juan held her back.

"Let us love! let us be happy!" whispered he in the most passionate tones; "let us be happy! Life is short and dark! Let us die in the arms of pleasure and joy!"

He had expressed the word that slumbered in the depths of her soul. An unspeakable tremor and weakness seized her heart; God and the future vanished—she desired only to love and—to die.

Yet her good angel still lived within her; she called to her her deliverer from danger—her lips stammered forth the name of Edla!

Saw she that pale, Nemesis-like countenance which suddenly rose up behind them both? With a cry of joy and of horror Nina exclaimed "Edla!" She sank at her feet, embraced her knees, and sympathising nature threw a veil over her soul. She sank down fainting. Edla raised her; threw an annihilating glance upon the seducer, who seemed like one struck by lightning, and bore away her insensible sister.

With raging fury in his heart, cursing his fate, Don Juan stood there. His foot stamped the ground as he raised his clenched fist. He was about to leave the rushing waterfall when he perceived a footstep. It was Clara, who, astonished by his look, merely remarked, "They told me that I should find Nina here!"

There was something in Clara's countenance and whole being which resembled a calm, clear, summer night. The voluptuary Don Juan had long been attracted by it, and at this moment he felt this with double force. His excited mind and the thirst for revenge suggested to him a devilish plan.

"The saints," thought he, "are as easy to catch as the

children of the world, only one must make their nets out of their own yarn."

But he craftily concealed his design. On Clara's assertion respecting Nina he replied:

"She will soon return. Ah, pardon for one moment! The evening is so mild, can your heart be less so? Will you vouchsafe no word, no look of comfort, to one whose breast is torn by unquiet?"

Clara remained standing, and said with a voice in which was some touch of sympathy, "What can I do for you? Tell me quickly, I have but little time."

Juan approached her and attempted to take her hand, which she withdrew.

"Tell me only," said he, "that you do not hate me—that you feel some kindness for one who would give up his whole life to be as pure and good as you, and to be guided to heaven by your hand. Stay—ah, do not hasten away? Your presence sanctifies even the air around me, and fills my heart with a pure desire. Beloved one! Holy one! Tell me that the heaven which you acknowledge will not cast me out!"

"Heaven casts out no one that seeks with earnestness," replied Clara mildly and tranquilly. "Seek heaven thus, and you will find it. Farewell!"

"Stay, heavenly Clara! Are you afraid of me?"

"Why should I be afraid of you?" asked Clara, stopping, and looking at him with quiet astonishment.

"Stay thus! Ah, stay with him to whom your presence gives life!"

"I cannot. You can speak with me at Countess H.'s, if you wish it. Adieu!"

"O Clara! that is hard. You say that heaven casts out no one—do not be severer yourself. Strike not back the erring. Show me the way to happiness, dear angel! Save a soul! O Clara! let me hold this hand, press it to my heart—this hand which——"

But he had only taken hold of air. Clara was warned by her good angel; she had listened to his voice, and had followed his beckoning; for in her soul there dwelt no vanity, either spiritual or worldly. She vanished like a shadow in the darkness of night.

With an exclamation of extreme vexation, Don Juan fol-

lowed her; friendly stars, however, watched over Clara, and she found her way; and when she heard the steps ever approaching nearer, when she could scarcely fly for anxiety and weariness, she sank saved in the arms of her friend, who came out to seek for her.

Don Juan had quickly withdrawn behind a tree. On its topmost boughs there was a magpie-nest, in which the young ones laughed while he cursed and swore.

And now—shall we betake ourselves to the bed on which Nina reposed, and by which Edla watched? Shall we wait for the awakening of the sleeper? We will not. We will turn our glance from the meeting of the sisters.

O truly it is a bitter, bitter thing to see eyes which once followed us lovingly, now looking upon us sternly and with displeasure, or indeed turning wholly aside from us with painfully-experienced contempt—nay, perhaps shedding tears over our weakness! Truly is it bitter, truly is it annihilating, and yet—blessed be the tears, blessed the severity in beloved eyes! Burn, burn into the soul of the fallen one! Burn to purify! Love, friendship, who will not bow himself before your chastising hand—who will not obediently open his inmost soul to your proving glance? Unhappy he who does it not! he is lost for ever!

Nina lay for three days in violent fever; Edla remained by her bed, a faithful attendant; but tenderness and confidence were vanished. Edla was quiet, but her pale cheek evidenced that which she suffered. One evening, when Edla thought Nina slept, she softly stroked back the curls which concealed the forehead on which she so gladly looked. Nina perceived this, seized the thin hand of her sister and placed it on her lips. Edla did not withdraw it. Nina covered it with kisses and bathed it in tears.

“Speak to me!” prayed she—“say one kind word to me!”

Edla bent over her and said with tenderness, “My poor child, I am always kind to you.”

A hot tear fell on Nina’s arm, which she kissed away.

“Now,” said she with a comforted heart, “I shall soon be better.”

A few days after this she was so much better as to be able to get up; and Edla no longer avoided an explanation, which both desired. Nina opened to her sister her whole soul.

Edla searched sharply, but tenderly, into all, even into its most secret folds. Nina concealed nothing: she experienced an alleviation of heart in her confession: she felt herself under the hands of a skilful physician. Divine confidence—refreshing drawing together of affection! Strengthening sympathy—sweet bitterness—ease after pain! How beautifully Jean Paul says on this subject:

“When a person is no longer his own friend, he goes to his brother who is so; this one talks gently with him, and is able to give him life again.”

And not the gentle word only; no, the severe also, nay, even the sentence of punishment, one hears willingly from beloved lips. The sentence of punishment? Art thou astonished? No! look deeper down into thine own heart, and thou wilt find it is so. Holy mystery of the soul, God dwells in thy innermost.

Edla found Nina's wishes pure; her own heart beat higher with joy because of this; but she was shocked at the state of her mind, at her weakness, at the slumbering of all nobler powers, whereby she had been nearly brought to the very verge of destruction.

With the whole strength of her clear vision and of her deliberate understanding, Edla now spoke to her sister, and showed to her her condition and her faults in the clear light which humbles, and yet at the same time raises up. She made her acquainted with herself; she made her feel how deeply she had sunk under the worth of true womanhood; and wakened in her the longing desire to raise herself again to her former position.

First a tear of remorse, then a prayer, then action—that is the course of amendment.

“You must give up this dreamy, frivolous way of life,” said Edla; “you must be active, must be employed, and you will feel yourself happy, and be able to do good to your fellow-creatures. Nina, you must endeavour to make a noble man happy, and to look for a support and a guide for yourself in him. Can you now calmly hear what I have to say to you, or shall I speak of it another time?”

“No, directly, directly, Edla! It is better that I know all at first. Spare me not, Edla! Do I indeed deserve that?”

“Now, right!” returned Edla. “An unpleasant report

has been spread about of an intimacy between you and Don Juan. Do not turn pale on that account, Nina; turn pale rather because you gave any occasion for it. A jest on the part of Don Juan, upon you and me, gave some probability to the report. Count Ludwig has compelled him to retract his light-minded assertions; and that truly by a duel. Don Juan has received his deserved reward in a sabre-cut across the forehead."

"Good God!" exclaimed Nina; "and I, unfortunate one, am guilty of all this mischief! And is that all? Has there not yet greater misfortune befallen? Perhaps the life of some one is in danger?" questioned Nina, beside herself with terror.

"No; be calm. Don Juan has left the place. His wound is not in the least dangerous, and will only leave a scar behind it. Count Ludwig has been fortunate enough to chastise him and defend you without any harm to himself. He has made use of this opportunity to declare the sentiments which he cherishes towards you. He has solicited your hand from your father."

"He is noble minded—oh, he is good!" said Nina, deathly pale and highly excited. "Oh, how little I deserve that! If I were but in a state to thank him rightly. Here is my hand, Edla. Take it in yours—dispose of it as you think well. I have so misused my freedom, I resign it to you. Speak only, and I will do, willingly do, that which you desire."

"Your own wish, Nina, your own re-awakened knowledge of that which is right and best, must determine us. But you shall not decide in this unquiet moment. To-morrow, when a calm night has strengthened body and mind, we will speak further on this subject."

That same evening, as Nina perceived more tenderness in Edla's attentions to her—as she read in her countenance traces of a lightened heart;—in the evening when her sister, as in the days of her childhood, sate a watchful angel by her bed, and spread out the flowers which she had gathered for her darling upon the coverlet, Nina felt that Edla must decide her fate; felt that she could do anything in order to win back her esteem and confidence, and a peace, long absent from her soul, returned again to it.

On the morrow, when the fanning winds awakened with their light wings the sweet flowers, and a flood of light, odour, and the singing of birds, pressed in through the opened window, Nina awoke also to a new and strengthened life. Pale, but self-collected and decided, she arose. Never, perhaps, had she been more lovely than at this moment, in which humility and strength had sanctified at the same time her whole being, and resignation had diffused over her beautiful brow an angelic charm.

Between the two sisters a conversation now took place, such as between mothers and daughters has often occurred, and will occur for ever on earth.

The daughter agrees to that which the mother wishes. She considers her will the best and the most prudent in the world, only she complains softly her want of love to the wooer; she feels esteem, perhaps friendship for him, but—but—

The mother talks of the stability of a union which is based on the rocks of esteem; of the happiness of an active, useful life for those who are dear to us; of the necessity of having an object, an interest in the world; of the peace which is the result of duties fulfilled,—and a great deal more.

Edla's words were by no means the suggestions of a cold heart and deficient understanding; they came forth from conviction. Count Ludwig, she said, was the noblest of men, and Nina alone by a union with him could develop that strength without the employment of which one could only lead a useless life.

Nina only repeated that which she had said on the preceding evening.

“Judge, determine for me, Edla!” was her prayer; “I trust myself no longer. That which you think, I think also—that which you wish, I wish. According to my best ability I will thank Count Ludwig for that which he has done for me, and for his faithful devotion to me. I will endeavour to be a wife worthy of him. I will, if I am able, regain the esteem of all, and make all happy; then I shall certainly learn to know true happiness.”

Edla embraced Nina; and so happy was Nina in the regained affection of her sister that she allowed herself, with a feeling of satisfaction, to be conducted by her in search of their father, that he might dispose of her hand.

But before we draw up the curtain, and exhibit to the reader the scene which delayed the two sisters in the room of the President, we must present to him a picture which was seen on the preceding evening by more people than ourselves.

We saw on this said evening the President, with uncovered head, as he endeavoured with the greatest possible care to shield his wife from a violent shower; we saw him as he took off his over-shoes in order to put them on his Countess, and then walk home beside her through water up to his ankles.

This may explain how it happened that the two sisters found their father sitting in an arm-chair speechless, with distorted countenance, and unable to move. The President had had a stroke; the Countess Natalie the while was pacing up and down the bath-saloon, surrounded by her friends and her numerous acquaintance.

By the use of active and prudent means the President, in the course of a week, was so far recovered that he was able to speak and slightly to move; his memory, however, was weakened, his countenance still contracted, and the whole of his left side paralysed. Several physicians unanimously agreed that the influence of a southern climate might perhaps re-establish his health; and a journey to Nizza was advised.

Whenever any great danger threatens, when on any occasion life is shaken, then the power of any fleeting bias gives way, and the strong feelings which are rooted in the better nature of the human being throw off the veil, and step forth; then strikes the hour of victory for really faithful and loving souls.

Thus was it also with the President. When he felt the powerful hand of sickness laid upon him—when the necessity for a long sojourn in a distant, foreign country was announced to him, he turned from his brilliant wife and her made-up tenderness, and extending his arms to his daughter exclaimed, “Edla!” He seemed unable longer to live without her, and was only tranquil when he saw her near him. Edla’s determination to accompany her father was resolutely taken at the very moment in which the physicians advised the journey, and the Countess esteemed it an actual favour of destiny that a seriously sprained foot prevented her, “to her perfect despair,” as she asserted, from following her husband.

Edla wished greatly to have seen Nina betrothed before she was compelled to leave her. Nina permitted herself to be wholly guided by her sister. The Countess, who had suddenly become cool to Nina merely out of aversion to Edla, maintained neutral ground, and made use more frequently now than ever of the word "bienséance."

Count Ludwig urged, and that not without some arrogance, the accomplishment of his wishes. But who was it then that prevented it? No other than the poor, sick, weak-minded President! He seemed to imagine that betrothal and marriage were one and the same thing; whenever Edla spoke with him of Nina's betrothal, he answered, "In a year's time, when I come back again!" In vain Edla endeavoured to make the matter clear and comprehensible; he still returned the same answer. At length he became angry and said, "Do you think that a gay wedding and my condition agree at all? No, in a year's time, when I come back again!"

Edla gave up therefore speaking with him any further on this subject, and resigned the hope of seeing Nina betrothed, before her journey, with the man whom she so highly esteemed.

"Take me with you," besought Nina from her inmost heart; "let me share with you the care of our father!"

Edla could not grant the wish of her sister. She feared for Nina's health, and besides this wished to dedicate herself solely to the care of her father, without being diverted from it by anxiety for her sister. She feared also, under existing circumstances, to separate Count Ludwig and Nina. It was determined to wait, and if in the course of a year the power of mind and body of the President was not re-established, the formal betrothal of the young couple should then take place. Till that time Nina was to remain with her step-mother, who declared, that during the absence of her husband she should live wholly retired from the world, on one of her estates which lay far up in the province of Nordland. Thither also in the next year Count Ludwig himself should come, she said, in order to spend the spring and summer with Nina. Edla was convinced that a nearer acquaintance with the Count would awaken in her sister the inclination which she so very much desired.

Nina felt herself inwardly happy by this delay to the

deciding of her fate, yet she dared scarcely to confess to herself this contest against the accomplishment of Edla's wishes.

It was evening. Edla was to commence the journey with her father on the following day. Nina had passed several days in the sick-room with her sister, and now went out, at her desire, to breathe a little fresh air. Miss Greta was gone on this day with her betrothed, with Clara, and the rest of the company, on a country excursion, and the walks around the Wells were almost empty. Here and there only crept along an invalid, whose feeble limbs had not enabled him to become one of the party. Nina remained on the turf before her father's house, and inhaled the fresh, pleasant air. The sun descended gloriously; small red and yellow flowers grew creepingly at her feet. The trees were tinged with the gold of the setting sun, and from their tops sounded forth a thousand-voiced song. Nina looked around her full of enjoyment; it was a beautiful picture, and she herself the most beautiful feature in it. She glanced lovingly towards the sun; she kissed caressingly its beams as they fell upon her marble-white hands; and the sun threw upon its beautiful daughter a glance of affectionate tenderness.

Nina now saw that a family, apparently of the working class, came slowly along in the shade of the trees, and at length seated themselves not far from her upon a bench. Husband and wife had good honest countenances, yet still marked with care. The children were pale and quiet; one saw in them poverty. A liveried servant with a basketful of the most beautiful fruit passed by them, and was asked by the man with some embarrassment—"Whether he could sell him some of that fruit?" The servant answered that he could not; that the fruit was a present to Miss Nina G. At that moment he perceived Nina, advanced towards her, and gave her the basket with a deep bow. After she had commissioned the messenger with many thanks to the Countess Nordstjerna, and had laid aside some beautiful grapes for her father and Edla, she took the basket, and stepped, blushing deeply, to the poor family, and prayed them, in the most obliging manner, to divide the beautiful gift with her.

Nina's indescribable grace, the beneficence, and the touching goodness which was painted in her countenance, made

perhaps a deeper impression upon the poor family than the gift itself. She took even the youngest child on her knee and gave it of the fruit, which, amid renewed invitations to eat, she spread upon the table. As she saw all around her so satisfied, and felt the little one on her knee struggling for very delight of the beautiful feast, she was conscious of a purer satisfaction than she had often known.

The good people were soon communicative, and Nina listened with sympathy to a relation of sufferings that visit most abundantly the dwellings of the poor. Yet here there was no lamentation, no discontent; but hope covering with its green leaves life which want and sickness had almost exhausted.

Nina was happy in this little circle, where inbred tenderness was at home; she also felt herself at home with these people, and kissed the child on her knee with hearty goodwill. Suddenly she saw Count Ludwig before her; who, with an expression of displeasure on his stern countenance, observed this scene. Nina's delight had vanished at once, and a certain constraint came over the artisan family. The children pressed nearer to their parents; the parents left off eating.

Count Ludwig turned to Nina, and said with a sharp intonation: "Would it not better become Miss Nina to take a turn through the walks than sit *here*? The evening begins to get cool."

Nina had hitherto felt nothing of coolness, but now she perceived it in fact. She acceded to the Count's wishes, and rose after she had kissed the little one, who parted from her unwillingly. The parents rose at the same time, in order again to express to Nina their warmest thanks. Count Ludwig scarcely permitted her to remain, or answer them with her usual amiability; he tore her almost away as he said carelessly: "Enough, enough, people! the children can take the remainder of the fruit with them."

"Do you know the people that you were there with *en famille*?" asked he from Nina, as he went off with her.

"No," replied Nina, with an unquiet look at the Count.

"Neither do I," said he heedlessly; "they may perhaps be honest people, perhaps thieves."

"We will believe the best," replied Nina mildly; "and I

more than believe it. I am, after what I have seen and heard, quite convinced that they are good and honest people."

"They may be so," continued he; "but it is always most advisable to avoid such intimate acquaintanceships, especially with people of that class. It is better for us, and better for them also."

Nina did not allow herself to be confounded by the condemnatory tone of Count Ludwig, but related quite simply and in good-humour how this little acquaintance had come about.

"I acknowledge," said the Count, curling his lip to a sarcastic smile, "that the affair, as well as the colouring of it, has something romantic in it; nay, you may even hope to see them next figuring in a novel."

"Believe me, I never thought of that," replied Nina, a little hurt.

"The affair would have passed off quite in another way, and as a mere trifle, if you had acted simply and rationally; that is, if you had sent the fruit to the artisan family by a servant. I would answer for it, that it would have tasted quite as good to them."

"That is in no way proved," replied Nina with animation; "how easily might not the tender feelings of these people have been wounded by my so doing. And then—why should not my way of acting, under existing circumstances, have been the simplest and the most rational? Is it not, on the contrary, highly unnatural to keep oneself perpetually in a state of defence against one's fellow-creatures? In heaven, where, without doubt, all will happen according to God's will, people will certainly have intercourse one with another in a totally different manner to what is commonly the case here."

"Let us therefore defer this kind of intercourse till we are in heaven," said Count Ludwig shortly. "Now, however, we are living on the earth; and what disagreeable consequences result from inconsiderately-formed acquaintance, we have frequent opportunities of seeing."

O my young reader! I see in spirit how thy eyes flash lightning here, and how thou, in Nina's place, wouldst have raised thy head proudly, and wouldst have made answer:

"If the Count fear that my inconsiderateness may occasion

disagreeable consequences, I desire sincerely that the Count should not have to suffer by them, and it is best that we here separate for ever!"

This answer pleases me most uncommonly from thee, thou good one; for it proves that thy heart and thy actions are pure, and thou hast nothing to reproach thyself with.

But it was not so with Nina. She had to reproach herself with much weakness, much inconsiderateness, and therefore she did not answer in this manner. She was silent, although her eyes filled with tears at the severity of the Count. Her natural humility, the consciousness of her past errors, the remembrance of Count Ludwig's chivalrous behaviour, all these things did not allow indignation to rise in her mind. She was silent and depressed in the extreme, as with her arm on the Count's she paced up and down the dusky walks. Count Ludwig broke silence by saying: "If I have been too warm, or too severe, then forgive me. Nature has given me no flattering tongue, and I know it will be difficult for me to win the favour of ladies. That is my misfortune. But believe me, I mean kindly by you."

"I believe it, I know it," said Nina warmly, touched by the tone in which he spoke the last words; and she slightly pressed his hand as he raised hers to his lips. They continued their walk, and Nina felt, as she so often did in Count Ludwig's presence, visited by the spirit of silence. She found not one word to say; her thoughts and her feelings seemed alike fettered.

This state may arise from two very dissimilar feelings—love and fear. Nina's feeling was not love.

As they returned it had become dark. The air was damp, a cold mist lay between her and her home. A shudder passed through Nina's tender frame.

"Are you unwell?" asked the Count with sympathy.

"No," replied Nina, "but I am cold."

"They walked somewhat quicker. This walk by the side of Count Ludwig was displeasing to her. It seemed to her an image of her future life—all so cold, so silent, and so dark! Their way led them past the table where the artisan family had sate: it was exactly as they had left it; the remainder of the fruit they had not taken with them. Count Ludwig muttered something between his teeth about "idiotic pride." Nina,

in the mean time, thought of another word, but said nothing. She hastened to forget, with Edla, the unfriendly impression which she had received.

It was a misfortune that Edla had scarcely ever seen in Count Ludwig those humours and traits of character which show what the man in his every-day life is properly to those around him. Perhaps Edla looked too exclusively upon that which distinguishes the statesman in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen. Nina, on the contrary, was much more sensitive to the virtues which make the happiness of family life. She had, however, renounced her own will to that degree, that she would not permit her thoughts long to dwell on anything which was displeasing to her in Count Ludwig. She guided herself according to his wishes; she thought on his distinguished qualities and esteemed them; nay, she endeavoured in deep earnestness to love him. Endeavour to love any one—Sisyphus-labour!

Edla set off with her father, who gave himself up like a child to her guidance. Deeply agitating was this separation for Nina, whose mind from so many causes had been so strongly excited. As to Edla, she appeared calm; the light trembling of her limbs alone betrayed the painful warfare which raged within her. She held Nina long pressed to her breast, as if she would impart to her the strength that dwelt there; she then laid the hand of her sister in that of Count Ludwig, and looked on both with an indescribable expression without being able to say one word.

It would be impossible to give all the histories, all the conjectures, and all the anecdotes, which the company at the baths related respecting these occurrences in the President's family. They furnished an inexhaustible fountain of conversation, whose quintessence for the greatest part consisted in the exclamation of,

“The poor Countess! O, it has cost her dear!”—and in the moral observation,

“How fragile we are! to-day full of health and vigour—to-morrow on the brink of the grave! The best thing is to be always ready!”

After Edla's departure, it seemed as if that earlier indifference to everything would again take possession of Nina, but she herself struggled against it. A still gentle serious-

ness, an indescribable amiability towards every one, gave to her being an irresistible charm. This operated even upon Count Ludwig, who became gentler in her presence. He felt that she alone was destined for his wife; he felt himself from day to day more fettered by her—she became more and more necessary to him; and he considered it almost as a misfortune, that by the death of a distant and unknown relation a great inheritance, of which he was become possessed, required his personal presence.

A short time after Edla's journey, he thus was also obliged to part from Nina. He did this with sincere and deep regret, and so much the more as he could not fix the time when he could see her again. How much easier Nina breathed after his departure, Count Ludwig had no idea. He thought that she had attached herself to him as to the future support of her life, and we will not deny that the thought of having a firm support is sufficient with many weak female natures to induce them to give their hand to a man of hard and even granite nature. But it was not so with Nina. That which she required as an inwardly animating power, was—sun. Count Ludwig believed that she looked up to him as to a higher being, and this was precisely the kind of devotion which his power-loving soul alone desired.

Soon after Edla's departure, Nina received from her the following lines:

“It often happens when we are distant from those whom we love, that we remember a word or an action which causes us to reproach ourselves: ‘thou wast not gentle enough, hadst not forbearance enough!’ I also, Nina, have such recollections, and would so gladly extinguish many moments of the last time we were together.

“I am far from you, and cannot speak with you—I write therefore. My good sister, preserve the following counsel in your heart.

“Be not too severe against yourself; judge not yourself too sternly; and above all things, do not let the occurrence which cast a shade upon your name degrade you to yourself. It is the actually accomplished deed which sinks us in the eyes of the world, because we have already fallen in its commission. The first thoughts, the first impure feelings; these

are they which we must fear, against these that we must combat. Watch over the feelings of your heart, my sister, for these are they, if pure, which sanctify, and give to you worth, properly speaking; but which, if they be impure, drag you down to the dust and make you despised, even without the commission first of the bad action. Our outward connexions, the laws of society, the rules of prudence, prevent many an open irregularity. But how few people there are virtuous for the sake of virtue; and who take pains to be not only pure before men, but pure before God also! And yet this is really the only true purity. When the endeavour after this in the human soul remits, then it sinks; when it wakes again, it becomes again elevated, and approaches nearer to God, even if it do not stand high in the esteem of man.

“But, Nina, no transformation is sudden. The elements operate slowly and wearily on the chrysalis which at length develops the butterfly. Our daily occupations, our associates, conversation, thoughts, feelings, all are the threads which unobservedly but intrinsically weave together the web of our life. Eternity is composed out of moments. If we waste these, how would we win that? Minutes make hours; hours, days; days, months; months, years; and years, the whole of human life! If we thought frequently on this, how different would our actions frequently be!

“My dear child, above all things, make intelligible to yourself that which you have now to do; think especially on the past time, in order to obtain light for the present; think on the path upwards which you have to tread, and if your soul be pure before God, your will will resign itself to Him: then your heart will be tranquil, and you yourself will be worthy of the noblest of men, and will make happy

“YOUR EDLA.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

NOW-A-DAYS all the world travels. A great part of life is passed on turnpike roads and in steam carriages. Nations visit one another with as much ease as next-door neighbours. Travelling is become a fashion; and as the characters in my novel are people of fashion, no wonder is it that they are perpetually travelling. Many of my readers, at all events I hope so, will not unwillingly follow where I shall conduct them—namely, to the East, towards

PARADISE.

And the gold of that land was good.

First Book of Moses.

Are they not heavenly, *these meadows?*

Heavenly! heavenly!—BELLMAN.

Paradise is the name of the small estate which Baron H. inherited from his ancestors; it lies in the sunny, hospitable Scania.

“Knowest thou that land?”

It is a glorious land! Rich harvests wave upon its plains. The heart is warmed there by the southern sun, and by the good-nature and joyousness that live in the breast of the inhabitants. Time spent among them passes lightly. The stranger preserves in his heart the grateful remembrance of all the kindness and hospitality which he has experienced there.

Paradise lies in this country, and thither Baron H. travelled after his marriage had been celebrated with the utmost quietness. The good and happy Clara went with them; and there they expected in a short time Countess Natalie, Nina, and several friends and acquaintances, for the celebration of the after-nuptials.

Miss Gret—the Baroness H. we should say, was on the journey in the highest degree inquisitive about the estate, whose name she was very solicitous to connect with swine, hens, and other unparadisiacal animals,* over which she jested

* I take the liberty, with the permission at least of learned gentlemen, of considering these animals unparadisiacal. Bishop Spegel, it is true, in his erudite work on “God’s Work and Rest,” named among the animals of Paradise “the

without ever succeeding in calling up even the least cloud upon the brow of her husband.

We must, however, confess that his estate of Paradise, taken in connexion with that unclean beast which furnishes bacon, did not appear to him altogether unparadisical; the two were not as much opposed to one another in his mind, as in that of his wife—nay, bacon and paradise seemed ever to be connected ideas with him.

And now let me tell thee, my dear reader, that a gayer nuptial festival than that which was to be celebrated in Paradise, could scarcely be thought of. It is a pure impossibility to imagine a more magnificent feast, a better or happier husband, a more good-humoured or more excellent wife, a better-beloved or more amiable lady-friend—we mean Clara.

But we must not forget to state that Filius through the whole of this important epoch conducted himself in a highly becoming manner, and dashed off several sketches of family scenes, in which his foster-father and his new foster-mother were always the principal characters.

After people had dined, laughed, and made their eyes acquainted with the beauties of Paradise—among which the Baroness did not omit to reckon also the farm-yard,—after they had played and danced together; finally also, after they had yawned a little together, the guests began by degrees to journey away. The Countess took Nina with her to the North, obtaining the promise that the Baron, together with his family, would follow them in the winter to Nordland, in order to enjoy the Christmas festivities at her house.

How the Baron and his wife now cultivated their Paradise; how they there, with the help of God, like every young couple, renewed in their own way the golden legend of happiness and love of the first paradise; how the Baroness, the very reverse of the former Eve, unremittingly warned her husband and her beloved Filius against the eating of apples; and how she, in the most cheerful humour, went examining about in her new world; how beasts and men stood and gaped at her; and how she diffused order and cheerfulness around her,—all this, were it written down, would make a

unclean swine." But as many learned inquirers into antiquity have asserted it to be very difficult to decide on such subjects, we give ourselves permission to consider these words of Bishop Spegel on this important subject as a poetical licence.

very interesting and instructive history. Above all things, I would willingly relate how active Clara was; how she was beloved by her friends; how she enlivened herself in the beautiful meadows and shadowy woods of Paradise,—of all this I would willingly give intelligence, but—the happy are sufficient for themselves. I long to visit the pale Nina, and to inquire whether life does not somewhere possess an elixir through which her own life may be strengthened and beautified—a life that, we acknowledge it, has hitherto resembled very little that of a heroine, and must have excited more compassion than interest. I leap over, therefore, with the kind permission of all good housewives—the Baroness H. included—the busy times of preserving, salting, and such like.

The November wind howls already before the windows; the heaven is grey, the earth is grey, the air is grey, the bird is silent, the leaf withers. Now the nose of the inhabitant of the north dyes itself blue and red; now the Englishman hangs himself; now people remain sticking in bad roads; now the soul of the poet and the last little flower of the valley are benumbed; now people require warm rooms and friendly souls—fire, everywhere fire! November, thou art an ugly, melancholy old fellow, full of storm and frost! But thou goest, and December comes, who is yet darker and sterner than thou! Now the misty hosts of heaven assemble themselves, and in order to conceal the unsightliness of the earth, and to defend the hopes of summer, he brings the light flaky snow, and spreads its covering over land and sea. Now I harness Baron H.'s sledge, and amid the joyous ringing of the horses' bells I travel post with him and his family towards Nordland.

CHAPTER XXV.

SHADOW AND LIGHT.

It is Christmas! it is Christmas!

The Children.

How cold, how gloomy it is! The window-panes are covered with ice; the morning twilight extends its hand to the evening twilight, and the dark night entombs the day. In Nordland, however, the mid-day has a few bright moments;

the sun sheds still a few feeble beams, then he quickly disappears and it becomes dark. Further up in the country, people know nothing more of day—the night endures for months.

They say in the North that “Nature sleeps,” but this sleep resembles death; like death, it is cold and ghastly, and would obscure the heart of man, did not another light descend at the same time, if it did not open to the heart a warmer bosom and animate it with its life. In Sweden they know this very well; and whilst everything sleeps and dies in nature, all is set in motion in all hearts and homes for the celebration of a festival. Ye know it well, ye industrious daughters of home, ye who strain your hands and eyes by lamplight quite late into the night to prepare presents. You know it well, you sons of the house, you who bite your nails in order to puzzle out “what in all the world” you shall choose for Christmas presents. Thou knowest it well, thou fair child, who hast no other anxiety than lest the Christman should lose his way and pass by thy door. You know it well, you fathers and mothers, with empty purses and full hearts: ye aunts and cousins of the great and immortal race of needlewomen and workers in wool—ye welcome and unwelcome uncles and male cousins, ye know it well, this time of mysterious countenances and treacherous laughter! In the houses of the rich, fat roasts are prepared and dried fish; sausages pour forth their fat, and tarts puff themselves up; nor is there any hut so poor as not to have at this time a sucking-pig squeaking in it, which must endeavour, for the greater part, to grow fat with its own good-humour.

It is quite otherwise with the elements at this season. The cold reigns despotically; it holds all life fettered in nature; restrains the heaving of the sea's bosom; destroys every sprouting grass blade; forbids the birds to sing and the gnats to sport; and only its minister, the powerful north wind, rolls freely forth into grey space, and takes heed that everything keeps itself immovable and silent. The sparrows only—those optimists of the air—remain merry, and appear by their twittering to announce better times.

At length comes the darkest moment of the year, the midnight hour of nature; and suddenly light streams forth from all habitations, and emulates the stars of heaven. The church

opens its bosom full of brightness and thanksgiving, and the children shout full of gladness, "It is Christmas! it is Christmas!" Earth sends her hallelujah on high!

And wherefore this light, this joy, this thanksgiving? "A Child is born!" A child? In the hour of night, in a lowly manger, He has been born; and angels have also sung, "Peace on earth!" This is the festival which shall be celebrated—and well may ye, you dear children, sound forth your cries of joy! Welcome, even though unconsciously, the hour in which this Friend, this Brother, was born to you; who shall guide you through life, who shall lighten the hour of death to you, and who one day shall verify all the dreams of your childhood; who shall stand beside you in necessity and care, and shall help to answer the great questions of life. Rejoice, ye happy children, whom He blesses! Rejoice, and follow after Him! He is come to lead you and all of us to God!

There are inexhaustible, love-inspiring, wonderful, entrancing thoughts, in which man is never weary of plunging. The sick soul bathes in them as in a Bethesda, and is made whole; and in them the healthy find an elevating life's refreshment. Of this kind are thoughts on that Child—His poverty, His lowliness, His glory!

It is a beautiful and wise ordination, that the life of the church unfolds itself most richly at that moment in which nature lies dead. For this receive thanks, Thou all-good Father!

So thought the quiet Clara, as with her friends she slowly wound along the hill covered with dark pine-wood, and ascended to the top, from which gleamed the illuminated windows of the present residence of Countess Natalie, which we call Umenäs. Clara looked out into the grey mist which embraced every object. In the midst of this darkness the lights seen from the height appeared doubly agreeable, and Clara's eyes rivetted themselves involuntarily upon them, whilst pleasant sensations filled her heart. She rejoiced in the thought of seeing Nina again, for whom she always felt the most cordial sympathy, and she questioned within herself:

"Is there also at last a light for thee, which warms and illumines thy life? Thou pale, beautiful, good, and richly-gifted maiden, wherefore shouldst thou be less happy than the insignificant Clara?"

"Coffee!" exclaimed Baron H., sleeping.

"Presently," answered the Baroness, who did not sleep.

"What?" inquired the Baron, waking up.

"We shall soon be there."

"Impossible!"

"Certainly!"

"Impossible!"

"But, my best friend, I assure you."

"But, my best friend, I do not believe you."

"We see lights already."

"I don't."

"Yes, so I believe; when one sleeps——"

"One does not sleep! Only one cannot see it;—only some folks have sharper eyes than others."

"It is inconceivable," said the Baroness, a little warmly, "that you, a person half asleep, should contend against that which two persons wide awake have seen. The window on your side is closed;—now just see!" and so saying she extended her hand to open the coach-window; the Baron seized her hand, kissed it heartily, and laying it over his eyes assured her that then he saw clear snow-light.

The Baroness contended no longer, and in tender peace or war—since it is extraordinary how often these two opposites are one—the travellers soon drew up at the door of the building which the Baroness called *house*, and the Countess *castle*.

We had it in mind to give to our readers a detail of the existing circumstances there; but we see a pen in the hand of the Baroness, and we think it therefore much more to our interest to present the following extract from a letter which, a few days after her arrival at Umenäs, she wrote to her confidential friend:

"But enough of the journey and its languid adventures. The reception was most friendly. It did not look in any respect Laplandish at Natalie's. A beautiful drawing-room well-lighted, new furniture, carpets, and an open fire! It would be difficult for Natalie to persuade herself, or others, that she leads here the life of a self-denying hermit. And the people in this hermitage? You know that always and everywhere I see *people* first. Natalie—magnificent! she seems as if she would enact the part of the fairy in her castle

upon the mountain. She has grown younger; dresses herself in velvet and silk; plays the harp, and wishes to enchant the whole world; and I am convinced that she succeeds. It has given me actual pleasure to see Nina again; she has strikingly improved in beauty, and begins to look like a creature of flesh and blood. 'The air here occasions that,' says Natalie. Thus there must actually be a magic in the air of Nordland, which has the power of renewing youth and increasing beauty. I therefore am very glad to have come here. I might not, in fact, be disinclined to become a little younger and a little handsomer for the sake of my good man.

"When I last saw Nina, probably four months since, she resembled a dove lamed in the wing, she looked so deadly pale and feeble; now she has recovered life and complexion—God knows if that be occasioned by the air. I doubt it. You know that it is not my custom to look upon people as ideal, to take them for angels and gods; but I see them commonly only as that which they really are. You will, therefore, be perhaps a little astonished at the description which I have it in my mind to give you; but you must not, on that account, charge me with enthusiasm, for I cannot endure this; and besides that, it would be quite unjust. But now to business.

"The evening we arrived at Umenäs we found several gentlemen in the drawing-room with Natalie. By chance my eyes fell on one of them, and I found it almost impossible to withdraw them from him. Not that he was so remarkably handsome, or played any brilliant part; no, but he was so altogether original. I never remember to have ever seen in a man anything so simple and amiable. You might have painted his forehead and his eyes. His complexion extremely dark, but clear and fresh. In his whole being is the most agreeable union of repose and animation, of strength and gentleness. There was a something both of the Apostles John and Paul in him at the same time. I never before felt myself so soon acquainted with any one, and never rejoiced so much in having made an acquaintance. Natalie spoke much in his praise, and added, that he played the harp like King David. I see that you begin to be somewhat impatient over my description, and inquire, 'Who then is this Phœnix? what is he? what is his name?' This extraordinary man is

the minister of the community here, and is called Edward Hervey. Is not that the name of a true hero of romance? How much his eyes, his words, his playing on the harp—to say nothing of the country air—may have contributed to the raising of Nina from the dead, I leave undecided.

“Do not, however, imagine that in the remotest degree I would surmise anything wrong. That one person can enliven and arouse another, is of the mercy and blessing of God. There is no need immediately to think of abduction and secret marriage. All that does not belong to our times; besides which, Pastor Hervey does not seem in any way like a hero of romance. He has the exterior of a very serious and serene-tempered man. I must, however, inform you, that if his eyes frequently rest upon her like two observant watchers, that they also very often dwell upon my quiet Clara, which does not displease me at all. Never have I seen black eyes with such a gentle expression; sometimes they are rather melancholy, although commonly they beam with a wonderful clearness; but I really and truly believe that these eyes have almost turned my head. I must divert my thoughts. I will cast my eyes about, and tell you what I discover outside the house; for I sit at the window, and can look over the country both far and near. Horribly ugly!—coal-black woods!—high mountains,—all wild and waste! Further off lies the sea, whose roaring one hears in stormy weather. On the right is the Ume river, which pours itself into the sea—down there, there is a beautiful valley. I have not seen it; nor have I any desire even to set my eyes upon it, for I do not think of going out the whole of the winter. This house lies upon a hill, and is stormed by every wind that blows. It is really extraordinary how it can be made so comfortable in the house. But then we make incredible fires, and thus it happens that the prospect over the wood is not so uninteresting. Remarkable cliffs rise up from the sea, every one of which bears an extraordinary name; one of them is called ‘the Peasant, or the Black Man,’ and looks supernaturally awful.

“Now assuredly you will want to know something respecting a certain lately-married couple?—Good! Husband and wife are both quite well, and on the whole get on tolerably well together. The wife sometimes is a little bitter, and has the greatest desire to take upon herself the entire govern-

ment of things; yet she fears daily more and more, that her husband, with his extraordinary good temper, and great good sense, will nullify her power, and make her as tame as any other wife. In the mean time the married pair have a guardian angel whom they bear in their arms, and they agree in no one thing more perfectly than in the love which they bear to the holy Clara. They hope, with her help, not to miss of the way to heaven. For the present, however, we remain on the earth, in order to celebrate the Christmas festivities. I really rejoice in the thought of hearing Edward Hervey preach on this occasion. He must look like an apostle. I must tell you that my good H. is as much taken with him as I am.

“Perhaps we may remain here longer than at first was our intention. Natalie wishes very much that we should remain over the winter with her; my husband is obtaining the most exact information he can on the usages of hunting in these parts; and I, like a good wife, would willingly contribute all in my power to the pleasures of my husband. I should, however, be guilty of falsehood if I were to assert that I make any sacrifices thereto—yet with all that our little Paradise was in all respects a more perfect abode.

“I must now leave you, for my husband calls me to arrange the Christmas games.”

Thus far from the letter of the Baroness H.

The joyful song of the Christmas-night resounded; and now then is joy on earth, and dance, and sport, and light in the habitations of men. They dance in the castle by wax-light, and to pealing music; they dance in cottages and barns by the blaze of the pinewood torch, to the unpretending music of the fiddle; long processions of sledges, filled with ladies and gentlemen, fly through the cities to the jingling of the horses' bells; and ragged boys speed little girls in hand-sledges down the hill, not unfrequently overturning their barefooted fair ones.

All goes on gayer at Umenäs this year than ever before in the memory of man. The Countess's rooms were all illuminated, and music sounded to the dance, so that it was a very delight. She would with her gifts have overflowed the huts of the poor with luxury had not Hervey earnestly and decidedly opposed it.

“They have not the means,” said he, “to obtain better lights and better music. It is not well to awaken in them

desires after things the want of which they do not at present feel, and without which they are perfectly happy. These lights may be preserved for the use of night-watching by the sick—where they will chase away many a gloomy shadow.”

In the mean time the winter passed away amid social pleasures and domestic amenities. The Countess and the Baroness confessed never to have spent a more joyous winter. To Nina, it appeared that only at Umenäs had she first begun to breathe.

For the life which reigned in the castle, for the agreeable manner in which the time was spent there, and the pleasant tone of feeling which was imparted to every member of the family,—all had, in an especial manner, to thank Edward Hervey. We will observe him a little nearer.

CHAPTER XXVI.

EDWARD HERVEY.

A clear and vigorous understanding; a strong and good heart; health and happiness,—that is the worth of man.—THORILD.

WILT thou see the preacher amid the peasant people of his community? There is nothing more beautiful! He went very much amongst them; he loved to see them cheerful; he mingled sometimes in their dances and conducted their games. No festivity was complete for the country-people if Hervey did not participate of it. His presence occasioned not the slightest constraint, although it prevented every intemperance. On the least tendency to rudeness or violence, the faulty one felt Hervey's hand upon his shoulder; and before his glance, and his warning but friendly words, “Softly, my child!” every unruly thought bowed itself immediately.

Hervey was the favourite of the parish. One person esteemed his upright intentions and his activity for the good of the community; another, his glorious preaching; a third, his reverence before the altar and his care for the education of the young; a fourth, his knowledge and the willingness with which he imparted it; a fifth, his agreeable demeanour, his gentleness, and his animation. People said of him everywhere as was earlier said of Ansgarius, “That one never had seen such a good man.”

The natural consequence of this was that one had never seen anybody who was so beloved and so revered as he. All, high and low, rich and poor, received from him counsel and consolation; and he had counsel and love for all. He never turned away from any one; he never cast down the weak, never repelled the heart that was willing to advance. His rich soul could comprehend all, could direct all. He drew mankind involuntarily towards him; for his glance was clear, his way of life blameless, his will firm, and his heart that of an angel.

In the six years during which Hervey had lived and worked in this country, both man and the earth had been very much changed. An active spirit of culture occasioned grass and corn to spring from the bosom of the one, and sound thoughts and feelings to shoot up from the heart of the other. Thankless fields and depressing discouragements, morasses and rudeness, vanished ever more and more. Taste for literature and feeling for art, lucerne and clover, struck, by little and little, deeper and deeper root. What Fenelon taught, what Oberlin did, that taught and did Edward Hervey. The first in virtue, knowledge, and industry, he was in the most beautiful signification of the word the shepherd of his flock.

That which made him especially dear to all was the worth, the importance, which man as man possessed for him. Pre-eminently the purely human in the life of every human being rivetted his attention. With what love did he not regard the operations of religion in the still-life which, unobserved by the great world, his quiet days developed; and thus he felt the same interest in obscure and insignificant life as in the most splendid: he loved to compare these in his conversations, and to place each in its proper light. How many striking traits, how many Christian sentiments, thus became conspicuous! How great, therefore, at times appeared life even in its own little, unobserved spheres! Hervey belonged to the romantic school—to that school which arose in that moment when Christ was born in a stable. History and romance has followed out this subject in endless variations. If from this cause a few strange marvels come to light, it cannot be considered as a human failing. Hervey, however, was free from all this; his soul was bright, and he loved to be just.

That which was indescribably attractive in him was the unspeakable gentleness and benevolence of his glance, his beautiful smile—a decision, a clearness, and freshness in his whole being,—all these contributed to increase yet more his influence. His superiority might have been overbearing had not his goodness gained all hearts. And yet for all that he was feared—feared as a minister ought to be. People considered an angry glance, a severe word from him, as a misfortune.

Hast thou ever met with any one in whose presence the soul has strengthened itself by an unspeakable satisfaction, and from whom a blessed feeling of security has poured itself through thy whole being? hast thou met with any one who made thee at peace with thyself, with God, with life, and with thy fellow-men? any one towards whom thou turnedst involuntarily as the sun to the light, or as man to a quiet, angelic nature?—if so, then hast thou experienced what most men felt in the presence of Hervey. It was as if a mild sunshine diffused itself from his heart.

Who can tell the influence of Hervey's life and being upon Nina? A great change began to take place in her. She was no longer the feeble, almost lifeless beauty; no longer that dreamlike shape. A vein of life and joy seemed aroused in her being. Like a child awakened from sleep, she looked clear and smiling into life. She beamed like the rosy light of morning.

But upon Hervey also Nina operated with irresistible magic. A secret power of attraction drew the one to the other, and made them conscious of a high happiness if they only *saw* each other. There was no need of words. And yet how delicious was the intercourse between them. How clearly she understood him,—how rightly he drew her out. He was the sun over her earth; she the mild dew upon his. They acted upon each other indescribably well, yet she received most richly. It was more than life—or rather it was life itself.

Thus happily lived she—thus tranquilly; for no one thought of disturbing her, not even the monitor within herself. Even the sharp-sighted Baroness H. became by degrees assured; for Hervey and Nina were in the highest degree frank and undisguised towards each other, and the still Clara was almost always with them, and received also Hervey's

attentions. That he admired Nina, and was willingly in company with her, was nothing but what was natural and necessary. Besides this, the Baroness considered it rational that Pastor Hervey would much prefer forming a marriage with Clara than with the beautiful daughter of the Countess, and therefore she did him not the injustice to believe the contrary. The Baroness had very early acknowledged Hervey's worth; and the more she learned to value him, the livelier was the wish in her that Clara and Hervey might exchange hearts; she herself would willingly have contributed something to their mutual happiness.

The Countess was at first astonished by Hervey's uncommon character and accomplishments, and then completely fascinated by them. She endeavoured, on her part, to attract him, and exclusively to fetter his regards. But she very soon remarked that he preferred Nina's company,—nay, even that of the original Baroness and the quiet Clara to hers,—and then, somewhat wounded by the discovery, she withdrew from him her observation, and turned it upon a handsome Colonel, who gave somewhat more to his handsome neighbour than barren admiration.

Hervey often spent his winter evenings at Umenäs. His presence gave an increased liveliness to all. Moments of melancholy which at times passed over his brow, like clouds over the clear heavens, did not disturb his influence. They quickly vanished—a glance on Nina, the tone of her voice, dissipated them, and he appeared doubly amiable from the shadow of melancholy which these fleeting moments left behind. Often also was he as happy and as playful as a child, and then no one could resist his merriment.

When Nina saw the preacher among the strangers who often were assembled in the Countess's drawing-room, she could enjoy but a small share of his society. Then he was surrounded by all; all hands were stretched towards him, in order to press his; all glances seemed to enliven themselves in him; every one had something to say to him,—something on which to ask his counsel.

Then for the most part sate the young Captain S. beside her, whose title of Count and whose great property gave rise to many and many a prophesying—of what my reader may well conceive. (Nina's half-betrothal with Count Ludwig

had been kept a family-secret, of which nobody in that place had the least suspicion.) Nor did Nina's behaviour appear at all to contradict these prophesyings. She listened to the young Captain so willingly, so kindly, so attentively; his fine figure and his handsome countenance made all that easily natural, especially for those who could not hear upon what the conversation turned. And upon what indeed did it turn? What indeed would the reader believe was it that the young man spoke of to the young girl? Why of his friend, of Edward Hervey, of his character, of his mode of conduct, of his excellence. He spoke out of the fulness of his heart, without surmising why it was that he was listened to so willingly. Young S. belonged to the most amiable class of characters, which forgets its own peculiar *I* in whatever is excellent, and are happy in so doing.

And now, after all this praise-exhalation of one man, let us add yet a little word on mankind in general.

It has already been often said, but it is so agreeable to repeat what one knows really is so,—that it is the peculiar impulse of man to glance upwards, to admire, and what is admired to love; and if there be moments in which a general feeling of brotherhood pervades mankind, they are those in which a great action or a mighty genius is revealed to the world. Then the whole world arises as one man and pays homage. This homage is a brotherhood in which all with all drink out of the same living well, and through which they all acknowledge themselves children of one Father.

My enemy, wherefore strive we one with another here so bitterly? We must indeed all of us become of one mind, if we would see God.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE WOOD AND THE COLONIST.

It rushes and roars over stock and stone,
And the witches dance on the moorland.

The Collier Boy.

THE frost-flowers melted from the window-panes. The sun made its appearance in the parlour, even when the company had assembled themselves to breakfast; the sugar melted in the gilded cups; the butter on the warm toasted slices.

Delighted guests, who found everything well tasted, sate round the table. The fire glimmered on the hearth; it had lost evidently in size and brightness, and seemed to look black because the sun made his appearance in the room. The Countess's two little dogs nibbled rushes on the mat, and the parrot as he sate on his perch shouted "Good morning!" And the morning was good, fresh, and clear, as a thought of Geijer's.

Nina stepped to the window. Rose-coloured and golden-yellow clouds floated over the heavens; the wood put forth green points from its winter covering; the ice glittered in a million diamonds; and little sparrows hopped and played about upon the snow.

"A beautiful day!" exclaimed Nina delighted; "Clara, we must go out! We will surprise the mountain-king and the magic-spirits in their morning sleep. We will go deep into the woods and lose ourselves!"

Nina now had thoughts like other young girls, beautiful, fresh, foolish thoughts. She began to be young.

Clara willingly consented. The elder ladies only besought them not to go too far. The Baroness in particular warned the young girls of the craft of the king of the mountain, and prophesied that their audacity would be punished, and that some really unpleasant adventure might befall them. The prophecy only inflamed the courage of the young ladies. They dressed themselves speedily, and set out on their wandering. The snow crunched under their feet. The cold was severe, and yet the air was so fresh that the cold only lent more animation to their motions. Active, light, and merry, with rosy cheeks and beaming eyes, they hastened forward. They were soon warm. Exercise, the fresh air, the magnificent winter landscape which lay before them in dazzling sunshine, made them enjoy the pleasure of existence. Nina's beautiful countenance beamed with delight and youthful life. Clara looked upon her with the admiration and joy which an angel's heart ever experiences when it sees the smile of happiness on the lips of a good man.

"Tell me, Nina," said Clara, "are we not happier here than they who to-day pace up and down the promenades of Stockholm to see and to be seen? They take out their vanity to be seen, and that prevents their seeing God's sun itself."

"Certainly, my dear little preacher," answered Nina, merrily, "for everywhere where there are pretensions there is no want of unrest. If we cast our glances too much on ourselves, we cannot send them out into the world. But we ought not to extend these observations to the greater number of the walking citizens; many of them go also into the air on account of health."

"Unquestionably," answered Clara. "You, for example, have enjoyed the pleasure which gratified vanity can give to the highest extent. When you went into Queen's-street, or when you drove about in your father's splendid equipage in green velvet and a pink bonnet with beautiful feathers, was there a single eye which did not follow you with pleasure? Still you never looked then so happy as now."

"Nor was I ever," replied Nina. "The attention which people showed me, and the idle applause which I gained, delighted me at times, but never made me happy."

"How could they make any one happy excepting for a moment!" said Clara; "and to these moments there succeeds only a void. Oh, I wish that mankind only understood how to be happy! Then they would leave cities and live in the country in nature. In order, however, to enjoy nature with one's whole heart, one must be divested of self-seeking; all littleness, all miserable self-love, and all narrow-heartedness, must be rooted out, and with clear eyes and a pure heart we must look upward to God's creation. Here, also, may it be said, 'he who will lose his own life for the will of God, shall gain instead eternal life.'"

Nina answered not—she thought of one good man. She looked upwards to heaven, and made Clara observant of its wonderful brilliancy. A tear of devotion trembled in Clara's eye. "How beautiful—how glorious!" said the young girls. They did not remark that a dark stretch of cloud rose ever higher and higher on the horizon; they turned into the wood by a side-path. The hare sprang forth from her form, yet remained standing at some little distance, and seated herself tolerably boldly on her hind-legs, to watch the peaceful wanderers. The cock of the wood flew about under the trees and threw the snow from the branches. Strange but agreeable tones resounded through the air, and in the mean time the very snow itself upon the rocks seemed to become animated—to take "shape and wing," and the ptarmigan flew whir-

ring away. The young girls rejoiced themselves in the peculiar life of the solitude; it was so new to them—so astonishing. They went from one footpath to another, and entered with a feeling of awe a wild and lofty pine-forest.

Nina and Clara seated themselves on a fallen trunk in order to rest a little. The tall tapering trees were clothed in a snow-gauze which enclosed them in glistening folds, and high above the heads of our friends the wind whistled in the dark tree-tops.

“How magnificent—how solemn!” said Clara, as her eyes gratefully glanced around her. “It seems to me as if I understood here the life of the northern antiquity. The earth was uncultivated—nature dark and mysterious. Man grown up in her bosom was dark and powerful in action like her; yet was he great and glorious in his strength. I know not what a feeling of supernatural pleasure seems to seize upon me, when I think on these times and their strange existence; on their giants, dwarfs, and magic spirits—on their power of prophecy and conjuration. I would give a great deal if I could only for one moment conjure forth again this legend-world, and make acquaintance with its giants and mountain-spirits.”

“Not I—not I!” exclaimed Nina, with a repelling motion of her hand. “I feel only fear of these awful incomprehensible beings; we will not entice them forth with our wishes. Let us be thankful that we live in a time in which human industry has let light in upon earth; where law and good order have changed it into a place of agreeable habitation. We will not lament the vanishing of that Titanic time—its power was more rude than great and pure; let us rejoice that the hour of humanity has struck. When I hear people depreciating the present times in comparison with the past, the words, or rather the thought, of the poet Shelley comes into my mind:

“The spirit of religion and poetry has poured itself forth over the heart of the whole world; it penetrates even through the granite mass. Man is less powerful, but he is softer and milder. Every-day business becomes beautified through love.”

“And truly,” continued Nina, as she took Clara’s hand in hers—“truly the pure, affectionate man, and the world which he creates around him, is the true and beautiful image of God.

Do you not remember that on the last evening these were Hervey's words?"

"I remember it," replied Clara; "and I am entirely of your mind. Believe me," added she, smiling, "I don't wish in the least to have lived in the times of the Gygiors and the Starkoddars; I would only amuse myself for a moment with a few of our heathen ancestors, in order to know what people thought of life in those days. If they only had a right perception of God, and rightly understood him, I think they must have been happier than most people now-a-days."

"Happier, and why?" asked Nina, astonished.

"Because," replied Clara, "they were more alone with nature and with themselves. The earth had more woods than now: there was no want of space to move in, and a fresh breath blew through life. The world of society was not then created, with its petty pleasures and its great plagues, which are more burdensome and numerous than Pharaoh's locusts. Man then could not be very unhappy. He died often, it is true, a violent death, but he did not waste away so slowly as now. He was freer—had more space for action."

"More space for action?" interrupted Nina; "but no air, no atmosphere of gentleness and love. O Clara, without love, without a human heart whereon to rest, wherein to live, the most extended space is nothing but a void—the freedom nothing but a burden! Nature itself, Clara, heaven itself, come not nearer to us—remain silent to us—before——"

Here she was suddenly interrupted by a shrill whistle, which appeared to proceed from somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood. The young girls sprang up terrified. The whistling was repeated many times, and each time shriller and louder.

"We have awakened a wood-spirit," said Nina, jestingly.

"Or perhaps a heathen dwarf," suggested Clara, "who now whistles to scorn our remarks on the times in which he was mighty."

"Is it the mountain thrush, or the misfortune bird, as they call him here in the country?" said Nina. "I have already once before heard his shrill cry. See, there he flies over us! let us go home, dear Clara; it is quite awful here in the wood. Hark how strangely it thunders and growls!"

A fearful rushing and roaring, in fact, filled the old moun-

tain forest; it was the sign of an approaching tempest. Almost in the same moment grey clouds overspread the whole heaven, and it began to snow. The young girls set out with hasty steps on their homeward way; but the spirits of the wood and the mountain had got loose, and began to play their unceasing pranks. The wanderers had lost their way in the wood; they perceived that it was so, and first tried one path and then another, but these all by degrees lost themselves again, and only conducted the girls deeper into the wood, whilst the snow wrapped them in thick clouds and concealed every path. The violence of the storm increased each moment; many trees fell before its fury,—in short, it was a perfect hurricane.

At first the girls began to laugh over the adventure—then they were silent—then anxious, and at last they deplored their want of foresight. They wandered about for a long time in the hope of finding a cottage, or of bringing some one to their help by their cries. Without complaint, but with ever-decreasing power, the delicate Nina followed her stronger companion; thus wandered they for hours. Fortunately for them, the rigour of the cold abated during the snow-fall, otherwise we should certainly have accompanied our young friends for the last time.

It began to get dark as they came to a lofty bare hill, which it was their intention to ascend in order that they might, if possible, make observations from its summit. Scarcely, however, had they gone a few paces for this purpose, when Nina sunk down almost fainting. Spite of her own and Clara's efforts, she was neither in a condition to raise herself nor to make any motion. The storm in the mean time had reached its height. It was a wild music of dissonant tones—a wild dance of trees and clouds—a wild running about and flying of terrified creatures of all kinds. All nature seemed in uproar.

Nina was strong neither in body nor mind. An indescribable terror seized her. She laid her head on Clara's breast, and whispered with tears: "Shall we perish here?"

"No," replied Clara prudently; "God will send us help!" So saying she clasped Nina in her arms, and endeavoured to warm her on her breast.

"But indeed," said Nina with a faint voice, "there have been people frozen to death in the woods, or become the prey of wild beasts. Why should Providence do more for us than for other people?"

"Good, then," said Clara with heavenly submission; "if we must actually die here, we shall also rest here in the bosom of the good Father!"

Nina wept. "I am yet so young," whispered she; "I have had so little pleasure—Edla!—Herv——" the name died upon her lips.

"You shall live! you shall be happy!" said Clara warmly and consolingly, yet at the same time full of anxiety. "I will call."

"Who can hear your voice? the storm, the storm!"

At this moment an extraordinary song reached the ears of the two friends. A voice rough and strong, without melody, but full of wild power, sang the following words, which appeared to control the tempest, for its raging abated during the song, and changed itself, as it were, into a threatening murmur.

Thus sang the voice of the mountain :

'Mid the gloom of the night-hour,
 'Mid the gathering storm-bands,
 On the heights of the snow-hills
 A wanderer stands;
 Sees vast trees uprooted,
 Sees rocks splintered, fall;
 Yet stands he unflinching,
 Unfearing, through all!

In the woods there's a roaring,
 It howls through the air;
 There comes from the mountains
 A cry of despair!
 Yet calm is the wanderer,
 He goeth aright;
 Neither joy, neither sorrow,
 His soul can excite.

Loud crying, escape they,
 The terrified deer;
 Before the fierce hurricane
 All crouch in fear!
 The warrior stands tranquil—
 In spirit he sees
 A power more mighty,
 Lands other than these!

Thou, Father Almighty!
 I' th' stormy night-hour,
 I sing for thanksgiving
 A hymn to thy power!
 Thou need but command it,
 The tempest takes flight,
 And forth from the tumult
 Come sounds of delight.

Acknowledge thy master—
 Thy rage be it stayed—
 Before Him bow Titan,
 Of Him be afraid!
 Be strong, feeble spirit,
 In need, God is near!
 And he who will trust Him,
 No tempest may fear!

At the first tone of the song Clara sprang up. A break in the clouds enabled her to discover, in the midst of the snow-storm which whirled around the summit of the mountain, a figure which resembled rather a shaggy mountain-spirit than a human being. It was the singer. He stood upon the highest peak of the mountain, was clothed with the skins of animals, and accompanied his wild song with extraordinary gestures.

Clara shouted loudly; the singer, however, appeared not to hear her. She had not a moment to deliberate; but after she had whispered a few encouraging words to her friend, began to climb the mountain as quickly as possible. Nina, at first, without rightly knowing what she did, had attempted to hold back Clara; but when she saw herself alone, her soul was seized upon by an inexpressible anxiety. The song ceased; suddenly she became aware of a cry of terror. The storm rose again at the same time, and as if with renewed strength. Several trees near her were immediately broken before the fury of the tempest; she heard no longer the sound of human voices; she was conscious of nothing but the cries of the wild creatures. Unearthly shapes seemed to dance before her bewildered glances; at last, all seemed to whirl round,—she felt as if a hundred weight had fallen upon her breast, and she lost all consciousness. Death had already hovered with his pale wings over Nina; but an angel stepped between him and her. It seemed to Nina as if she began to dream, somewhat confusedly to be sure, but sweetly and

agreeably. She heard melodious tones and words. She did not understand their sense, yet they did her good. She felt herself raised from the earth, and borne thence as if on angels' wings. A pleasant warmth diffused itself through her breast, and recalled the beating of her heart. She felt no more depression, storm, nor winter. Paradisiacal landscapes seemed as if they would open themselves to her view; ever more blessed became the state of her mind: she feared nothing except the waking too soon from this state of bliss.

We turn now for a moment back to Clara. The words of the song which she had heard animated her courage, and she actively climbed the mountain amid continued cries for help. But the shaggy singer was too much busied with his own voice to be able to listen to that of a stranger. It was not till Clara, nearly fainting with fatigue, had almost reached the summit of the mountain, that he became aware of her call, and turned himself towards her. He was, however, all at once so bewildered, and made such wild gestures as he sprang towards her, that she thought he must be insane. At that very moment, however, another man darted forward and struck powerfully back the shaggy one, stretching forth his arms to support the almost sinking girl. With a cry of joy and astonishment Clara recognised—Hervey.

The shaggy man wished to separate him from Clara. Hervey stood on the defensive, and a wild contest ensued between the two.

Like two strong bears they wrestled,
Upon their hill of snow;
They combated like eagles,
With a raging sea below.

At length Hervey succeeded in overthrowing his antagonist, who cried out immediately—"Hold! it is enough!"

"Knut!" exclaimed Hervey, astonished, as he recognised the voice of his opponent.

"Pastor Hervey," said the other, "is it you that are so savage with me?"

And the contest ended with a shake of the hand.

"Where—where is Miss Nina?" asked Hervey, with evident anxiety, from the astonished Clara, who could only reply to him with difficulty.

"My cottage is in the neighbourhood," said the other, and pointed with his hand in the direction opposite to that in which Clara had come.

"Stop quietly here," said Hervey to Clara; "and you," said he, addressing the shaggy man, "do you remain in defence of her. I will return in a moment."

In a few seconds he was out of their sight. The shaggy man looked after him. "He can leap, he can clamber among the mountains," remarked he, with a glance of pleasure, "like any goat."

He now rivetted his eyes upon Clara, and as he gazed his expression became more serious, more heartfelt, and more tranquil; he then folded his arms, and tears filled his eyes. He resembled a fawn which worships a hamadryad. The hamadryad, however, was anxious, and would willingly have gone with Hervey to Nina, had not her feet been so weary.

Lying upon the snow, and as white and cold as it, Hervey found Nina. The sight of her went like a stab through the heart. He took her in his arms; he warmed her on his breast. With the precious burden on his beating heart, he approached Clara and her admiring worshipper. There rested he for a moment, and here was it that Nina awoke. She saw Hervey's eyes upon her—she found herself borne in his arms—her head rested upon his breast. She fancied she had seen an angel, and powerless, but happy, she closed again her eyes. Why did the colour tinge her pale cheek? Did any one see the tear which fell from that manly eye? Night concealed it, but Nina felt it upon her lip—that warm tear of love and joy,—and never did loving dew operate more refreshingly on a fading flower.

The path down the other side of the mountain was not so steep. Clara, spite of her refusal, was obliged to permit her shaggy worshipper to carry her; for she was completely overcome, and she was not able, in the increasing darkness, to find firm footing anywhere. Knut went foremost with her; Hervey followed him with Nina: both of them happy in the dark stormy night.

After a short journey they arrived at a small settlement. A friendly bright fire glimmered through the window of the cottage. The shaggy man raised his voice, and his call was answered by animals of various kinds. Dogs barked, cows

lowed, sheep bleated, hens cackled; yet above all a certain shrill tone was heard, which no one, however, could tell whether to ascribe to man or beast. The shaggy man called "Becassine," and a dwarf immediately appeared at the cottage door, with a pine-wood torch in his hand, whose crippled troubled figure, and bleared and deep-sunk eyes, did not at all remind one of an image of God. He saw the arrivals with a half-witted expression of countenance; yet a gleam of pleasure exhibited itself in his eyes as the shaggy man laid his hand upon his head and said to him, "Becassine, thou must fly. Strike a light and get ready."

In the clean and spacious cottage Nina was laid upon a couch of reindeer skins, over which a counterpane was spread. In the mean time, Hervey, with the help of Becassine, had prepared a strong draught, which he placed at Nina's lips.

"It is bitter, but beneficial," said he.

"It is not bitter," answered she smilingly, when she had drunk.

Hervey set the vessel to his mouth in the very place where Nina's lips had rested, and drank the remainder. Love, the chemist, may explain to us how it happened that the bitter draught had changed itself, with both of them, into sweet nectar.

Clara had to receive her life-elixir from the hands of the shaggy man. There was in this man's demeanour a singular mixture of bashfulness and boldness; of embarrassment and decision; of dignity and want of manner; and these two last opposites were especially observable in him. His features were handsome, his figure powerful. He produced, at the same time, an extraordinary, yet an uncomfortable impression.

After Nina had taken the strengthening draught, she was consigned to Clara's charge, who, again perfectly recovered, rubbed the limbs of her friend with snow.

The Colonist had thrown off his shaggy covering, and now exhibited himself in the coarse dress of the peasants of the country. He set himself about to prepare the evening meal, whilst Hervey went out and fired off a gun, at short intervals, three several times, which was the signal agreed upon for the people who were gone out in all directions in search of the young ladies. This signal, repeated at intervals of ten minutes, soon brought all seeking parties to the colony. The

Baroness herself made her appearance with a torch in her hand and a thorn in her heart, at the head of a great crowd of people, before the door of the cottage. The thorn, however, lost its smart as Clara clasped her weeping in her arms; and instead of angry words came tears of joy; nor could she the whole night through regain her customary jesting humour.

Under the conduct of Becassine, people were sent to the Countess to give her information of the state of affairs. The Baroness would remain through the night with her dear young friends, and the next morning, with Hervey, would conduct the lost sheep back to Umenäs. Hervey also despatched a messenger to his mother; and after all this was done, a comfortable repose diffused itself over the little company, which but a short time before was so uneasy. The Baroness sate on Nina's bed, and Clara went out in order to assist the Colonist in the preparation of supper. He was somewhat embarrassed by Clara's entrance. There seemed to be considerable danger that the eggs would be altogether lost, and that the ox-tongue might make a nearer acquaintance with the milk than would be entirely advantageous to either, while the potatoes ran in every direction but the right. Clara's tranquil and self-possessed behaviour, as well as her acquaintance with all the affairs of the kitchen, however, soon reduced all again to order and to the usual routine of things. It was not long before she jested with the cook on his bewilderment; and it speedily followed that the two were perfectly contented the one with the other. But when, ere long, Clara saw the good-humoured and observant glances of Hervey fixed upon her, then came her turn for embarrassment and bewilderment.

The supper was carried in, and found to be excellent. The attention of Hervey made amends for the want of servants. Nina's eyes filled with tears of gratitude as she heard the tempest roaring without and saw all her friends assembled here round the friendly fire, herself the object of their care and sympathy. Her heart was filled with grateful sentiments. Under other circumstances this supper, with its lack of knives and forks, and the therefrom-ensuing laughable results, could not have failed being lively in the highest degree; but the late anxiety and danger seemed as if it had lamed the

risible muscles. The Baroness sate silent; and Clara could not look on her and think of the danger to which she had exposed herself on her account without her eyes filling with tears, for the Baroness, in speaking to her, had candidly said, "You must not imagine that it was alone on Nina's account that I was so foolish as to go driving about in the stormy, cold, pitch-black night. I am only glad that H. was not at home, or he would certainly have kept me back, and then that would have occasioned the first married quarrel!"

Immediately after the evening meal the ladies were left to the enjoyment of that rest of which they stood in such urgent need. The Colonist spread out straw in an adjoining chamber, as a couch for himself and Hervey. Hervey, who was interested in his chamber companion, when they were alone together, addressed to him various questions on his past and present life.

"I cannot give you any verbal information," replied the Colonist; "if, however, you wish it, I will make you acquainted with me by writing."

Hervey kindly reproached him with the life of isolation which he led. Man ought, he said, to endeavour to make himself useful to his fellow-men. To this the Colonist replied only by a melancholy shake of the head, and these words—"I have served my fellow-men most effectually by going out of their way. My life, however, is not entirely useless; I make the animals happy that surround me, poor Becassine included."

"A paradise for animals?" said Hervey, smiling and pointing to many hams and pieces of dried meat which, hardly less numerous than in a butcher's shop, hung from the ceiling.

"I will answer you that question early to-morrow morning," replied the Colonist.

When the morning dawned, the Colonist conducted Hervey to his cattle-yard. Here, to his great astonishment, he saw, in a place separated from the rest, two guillotines—one for the larger and one for the lesser animals.

"Animals must die," said the Colonist, "yet nature herself will seldom provide them with so gentle and so unsuffering a death as they meet with here. When their little hour has struck, they come here, receive once more their favourite food, and then falls the axe, which separates them, without

combat and pain, from a life which they have as perfectly enjoyed as is possible to animals in particular; and during which they have received food, shelter from the severe weather, space for exercise and sport, and caresses from the hand of their master."

A smile of approbation diffused itself over Hervey's countenance. "That is good," said he; "I will for the future follow your example. We are still unsparingly severe and barbarous in our treatment of the animals which serve and feed us. Of how much importance should not man make it to free that from suffering to which, after its earthly life, no immortality follows—at least not to the individuals of the species.

"You believe then in the immortality of the species?" inquired the Colonist with animation.

"Yes," replied Hervey; "I believe on a new heaven and a new earth—on the life of glorified man in a more glorified nature. I believe with Paul on the redemption of the Creation. Man and Nature are fallen together, and together also will they be redeemed."

"I rejoice on that account!" said the Colonist, with his eyes full of tears. "I love the animals, the flowers, the mountains! I have found myself better in their society than in that of mankind. I acknowledge my being in theirs—their being in mine. They are parts of my life!" Here he extended his arms towards the wild country which surrounded him.

Wind and clouds seemed about to separate after their mighty contest; that sighed and murmured still at times in the wood, agitating ever its tree-tops more gently; these withdrew their grey, snow-laden masses towards the west. The Colonist released his domestic animals—tame, lively, and caressing, they surrounded him. Hervey observed this scene with his own peculiar smile. The Colonist soon talked to his animals as to children, and soon answered the question of his guest respecting their physical and moral treatment. In this particular Hervey resembled the Count in Titan; everywhere he botanised among the grasses and flowers of knowledge; no field was for him entirely barren.

As the sun came forth from the gate of the east, and

threw his fire-beams over the landscape, Hervey involuntarily turned his glance to the cottage,—and behold, there stood at the door, more lovely than the sun—the lovely Nina, fresh and charming as a May morning. Hervey was quickly before her. She extended to him her hand—he pressed it to his lips and held it in his, and round about her there moved life and joy. The trees bowed their gold-coloured heads. The blue roof of heaven shone pure and bright. Hervey glanced on Nina—then around her—and lastly up to heaven. Her glance followed his. In both it was morning-devotion—a silent espousal of the soul with each other, with nature, and with God.

Happy are the hearts which are united in purity and in piety—their covenant cannot be dissolved by earthly fate!

And who other than Clara stands beside the Colonist? She emulates him in feeding and caressing the animals, or rather has it all to herself, for he, at that moment, in watching her, forgot everything else. Hervey and Nina joined them, and rejoiced over the tame animals, that seemed living here one with another as in the concord of the Golden Age. The Baroness also came forth, and that with a brow as cheerful as the day itself.

Becassine's coffee found the company in the best of humours, and was praised by the Baroness, as was only reasonable.

A crowd of people, who had been sent by the Countess to cut a carriage-way through the snow to the colony, now, between woods and rocks, made their noisy entrance into this peaceful nook. By this means the Countess conveyed to them carriages, furs, and all imaginable conveniences.

The company now must separate from their kind host, after many prayers, especially on Hervey's part, for a mutual visiting. The Colonist made no reply to these invitations, but as his guests departed, he merely cast a glance upon Clara, which seemed to say, "I remain alone behind!"

This late adventure, however, was not without its bad consequences on the young ladies; Nina in particular suffered for many weeks, and the Baroness preached violently against all that kind of crusading.

Did Hervey remind the Colonist of his promise regarding

the written communication? Did the Colonist keep it? And is the reader as curious as Hervey was to know something respecting his life and fate?

We take the liberty of answering, Yes, to all these questions. If, however, any reader should protest to the contrary, he is perfectly at liberty to skip over the leaves which relate to this subject.

At the moment, however, in which I seize the pen to draw forth long-concealed sufferings to the light, which many persons will not comprehend what can be the good of,—at this moment I hear a spirit voice softly warning me :

“A proud and powerful man would hardly, after thirty years’ war, days of judgment, changes of nations, rent-to-pieces sun-systems, tear open his clothes to exhibit to the world the wounds in his breast.”

Shade of a great man, glorious Jean Paul! forgive, if a little worm of the earth dare to answer thee :

“The combat does not become wild because it is fought between great masses; misfortune is not great because it has reference to world-systems. It is very possible that the Thirty Years’ War, with all its horrors, could not show such a dark perfected tragedy as may be borne in the breast of one man, even in peaceful times, and in the midst of the most attractive surrounding scenes! There is a God who operates in the times of war—it is a God also who bleeds in the breast of suffering men.

Nought is mean, nought is great, in the eyes of the Father Eternal,
For he sees through the shell, ’tis only the kernel he heedeth,
And nothing escapes him: be it little or great he regards it.”—MELLIN.

Therefore, unfortunate one, whoever thou mayest be, present thyself before the universe; not all the songs of the spheres shall overpower thy voice. Yet I expect thee not in the hour of wild pain and sorrow! And if no other hours should dawn for thee then, lament not—suffer silently—praise God and die!

But hast thou found deliverance? Has light sprung up for thee in darkness? O then come, relate to us how thou hast suffered, how thou hast lived, and thus impart to us a few drops from the spring which has healed thy wounds!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE UNFORTUNATE.

“ ONE beautiful June morning I found myself in the open fields. I *found* myself, yes! for I had lost myself, my feeling, and consciousness, my thoughts and all! Driven forth by an untold unrest, and by the desire to fly from an unspeakable anguish, I had left my home in the city on the foregoing evening, and had wandered about the whole night, till a fresh morning wind—a flower odour—a pang at my heart—I know not what, recalled me to myself again. I looked up, looked around me, and was conscious of what I saw. Ah, it was glorious around me! The meadows glittered with flowers and dewdrops—the sun mirrored itself in them. The wood, still wrapped in shadow, shook, as it were, sleep from its twigs. The lark, raising itself on light wings to the rosy clouds, sank in jubilant melody the pleasure of life which all existences in nature seemed to feel. Yes all—all but me. Dark and unhappy, I stood alone in the joyful bright world! And my misfortune? Happy he who understands it not! Happy he who can say, I know it not! He never has felt what it is, not to be able to lift his eyes to look into the face of his friend, and never has seen how the friend in consequence of that has turned his face from him. He knows not how it is, if the tongue refuses its service, and his heart contracts itself backward at the moment when men come towards him full of sympathy and kindness; and then, when in consequence of that, they by degrees look shy and withdraw themselves. He knows not what it is to love—to love passionately, and to find no word by which to express his love, to be undetermined and trembling when by manly determination one should act and succeed. He knows not what it is to see her whom we love blush for us,—to see how she turns herself from the closed heaven of love, and gives heart and hand to a bolder one, who loves not better, but who knows how bolder to speak. He has never experienced what it is to excite only laughter or opposition by his passion, and, with a pure heart, to win only scorn. Happy he who has no idea of all these pains!

“I loved mankind, and I shunned them because my intercourse with them was a torment to me. I never could give expression to the sympathy which I felt, and never take part in the joys which they had. Never, when I saw others weep, came tears to refresh my burning eyelids; my tongue never found a word of consolation. With a world of feeling in my breast, I was doomed to silence. I lay, a Prometheus chained to the rock, whilst the vulture gnawed my heart. The ridicule which my temperament involuntarily excited sounded like the hissing of snakes in my ear. I knew that I deserved it; and yet, O my God! I was an innocent, a kind-hearted man. There were no mean sentiments in my breast. I would have died joyfully on the cross for the well-being of mankind, and I was sentenced to martyrdom and—social life.

“Happy art thou, thrice happy thou, who dost not know what that embarrassment is which sets itself in the breast of man, and with a cramp contracts the free play of his nerves, tearing and rending with sharp claws, and dissipating all rest and comfort! There are very few who have not once in their lives had a blow from the pinion of this night-owl; yet there are, God be thanked! still fewer in whose breast it has constantly made its nest.

“Yet I was not always so. As a child I was unconstrained, and my eye bore without embarrassment the eye of another. I remember myself then with pleasure, almost with admiration.

“At my entrance into the great world, something occurred to me in itself insignificant. I was guilty of an impropriety in a great company—of such a one as too often happens to novices in the polite world, which is laughed at, and then forgotten. The laughter, however, which I excited aroused in my breast a feeling hitherto unknown to it. From that moment I never again forgot my awkwardness, and this feeling never more left me. It cast a spell as it were over my demeanour and my actions. My days became a chain of the most ridiculous incidents and the bitterest sufferings. All attempts to overcome this demon, or remove it, only served to deliver me ever more into his power. I wrestled with it, I cursed it, and it only clasped me the closer. The higher my rage rose, the more violently my combat against this invisible

enemy was inflamed, the more unlimited was his power. O how with the weapons of reason and philosophy have I not combated in the still sleepless nights with this fearful spectre, and then when day and light and my fellow-men came he has only held me faster than ever in his iron arms. He did not govern only my limbs and my actions, but also my thoughts and my feelings. I passed one year after another in this fruitless struggle. My inmost feeling became darker and darker. I said to Joy, 'What wilt thou?' and to Laughter, 'It is folly!' I wished to become blind. Happy are the blind! Their misfortune speaks to the hearts of all men. Their embarrassment, their little awkwardnesses, are not ridiculed. Their eyes never meet a scornful glance. O! if the eternal night sealed my eyes—if it had extinguished for all time their embarrassed, uncertain glance,—then—then certainly should I have rest!

"There are the strangest sufferings on earth; one only of all these is intolerable, nay, almost insupportable, for it consumes the marrow of human strength—and this is that falling out of man with himself which makes him burdensome to himself and to his fellow-man. Leprosy, with unabated strength of soul, is hardly to be called a misfortune; nay, had I suffered from loathsome disease, surrounded by Job's comforters; or had found myself solitary in the desert, with birds of prey hovering around me, waiting for my corpse, I should not have felt myself so unfortunate as I was, had only my nerves and my glance been under the control of my own will. But give me riches, health, beauty, and with these this weakness, this nervous unrest, this embarrassment, and I must be discontented, hopeless, unfortunate. Unfortunate in so far not—yet of that later.

"I had read of some one who always saw a human skeleton before him, and who, consumed by the vision, sank slowly into the grave. This appeared to me a trifle in comparison with the curse which seemed laid upon me. A greater misfortune had been a refreshment to me. Sometimes I fancied that a crime, a murder, would do me good; and that scenes of blood and cruelty would arouse me out of my dream. Horrible! horrible!

"Had I lived in times of war, when men stand in need of sacrifices and of martyrs, I should have given myself up as one

of them ; and in striving after the crown of martyrdom, I should have destroyed the demon of my life, and have regained myself. But all was peace and joy around me.

“ A form of light stepped towards me on my path. A good and beautiful being spoke to me with the tongue of an angel. The heavenly peace in her eyes gave to me again my lost tranquillity. I could look upon her ; I could sun myself in the glance of a human being. Heaven, what delight ! I lost her whom I loved through my own fault, or rather through the power which governed me,—and like some one possessed by furies, I left my home and hers !

“ Now in the fresh morning hour my eyes withdraw from mankind, I cast a long glance into my heart, and upon my past life. Several of my friends had told me that haughtiness, or a too easily wounded self-love, was the cause of the condition in which I found myself.

“ Was I then haughty ? Was then my self-love so great ? Ah, my God ! the little speedwell at my feet which opened its eye to the day and waved itself with unconscious delight in the wind, appeared to me to be much more than myself—I envied its life. And the tree which lifted itself majestically above me, so proud, so tranquil, as if it were conscious of the strength which defied winter and its storms, and now put forth millions of leaves to afford shade to the wanderer, and shelter to the birds,—this glorious tree ! O how little I felt beside it !

“ I went further, whilst a crowd of ever-returning thoughts mounted up in my soul. I had seen many now whose life was stained with crimes and vices, and their glance was clear and unblenching ; their demeanour full of decision. They rejoiced themselves in the good wishes of their fellow-men,—ah, they enjoyed the heavenly joys of love ; they were beloved—nay, worshipped by affectionate and angelically pure beings. I had seen others—I myself was one of them—pure in heart and conduct ; yet who, at the same time, could obtain no one little crumb of that heavenly bread, which the fortunate in life enjoy in full measure. Why is this so, thought I, in a world where God governs ? God, who in his Word has placed the good on the right hand and the wicked on the left ? The contradictions of life,—and many a wherefore ? that re-

mained unanswered, raised itself like a chaos in my soul, and wrestled wildly one with another.

“In one of these moments I stood upon a rock. Below me rioted a waterfall. Vast masses of water were tumbled incessantly into the gulf, where, foaming and hissing in untameable fury, they struggled one with another.

“I saw the giant of nature rage; I listened to the wild, deafening thundering. Extraordinary emotions awoke in me, my breast expanded itself; a resistless desire for combat arose within it. An indescribable longing after the deep took hold of me! It was not death which I sought. I had a dark, but violent wish to drown the unfathomable demon which possessed me in that depth; to free myself from him, and to come forth new-born! Here, in the thundering deep, would I struggle with him and overcome him—would come to myself and breathe freely. Ha! how deeply—how freely would I breathe! I was sensible of frenzy—I felt joy—madness! and with a despairing cry of exultation I sprang with outstretched arms into the depth below. It raved and hissed around me, my thought grew dizzy. The ‘thundering flood seized upon me. It raged—raved and whirled within itself—my soul was benumbed—it was still.

“When consciousness returned to me, I lay upon the earth at the entrance of a grotto. A singular little old man, clothed in grey, stood beside him, and observed me attentively. He was almost as broad as he was high, with a head disproportionably large. He had riveted his large grey eyes upon me. His high forehead was bald, and the snow-white hair that surrounded it dripped with water.

“This extraordinary figure, the place where I found myself, and the rushing of the waterfall which rang in my ears, gave rise to extraordinary thoughts in me. It was to me as if a river-god had taken possession of me, and I was now in his power. Whilst I was giving myself some trouble to arrange my thoughts, a sarcastic smile spread itself over the coarse features of the old man, and he said in a deep bass voice:

““Ha, ha! he begins to move himself. A pretty play to force old folks to take a cold bath! Yes, yes! uff!” and he began to wring the water out from his coat-laps.

“I wished to stammer out an excuse, for I now saw plainly that I had not to deal with a river-god, but with a human creature, who perhaps had ventured his own life to save mine; but in this he interrupted me, scolding the while with the deepest of voices.

“‘Uff! will he be silent? That will come later. It is now more necessary that water should come out of your mouth than words. Uff, uff!’

“And without further ceremony he seized me by the legs with herculean strength, and made me perform various pendulum motions. Unable to make the slightest opposition, I lost all consciousness a second time, and I believed for a moment that the demon which governed me had taken bodily shape upon himself in order palpably to revenge himself for all my attempts to withdraw myself from him.

“Other thoughts came to me afterwards, as I lay in a state of perfect debility on a heap of straw in the grotto, nursed and waited upon by the old man. His voice to be sure was gruff, and his words were not even the softest, but in his behaviour towards me he exhibited as much kindness as prudence.

“He appeared to inhabit the grotto, which was dry and conveniently furnished. He prepared our simple meals himself. In the evening he read aloud to me out of the ancient classics, and selected particularly such passages from them as were calculated to strengthen a weak soul, especially examples of stoical resignation; still oftener, however, he made choice of the Gospels.

“He spoke with me of the Saviour of the world. I had already turned to him. I was unfortunate. The comforter of those who mourn could not be unwelcome to me. Yet his image was not quite significant to me; now it was made clear to me. I learned to understand him; I learned to love him. I wished I had lived in the times in which he was on earth. I thought continually how I would have thrust myself among the crowd of the blind, the lame, and the sick, and more unhappy than they, would have called, ‘Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me! Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst deliver me!’ I heard my own exclamation. I saw him stand still, and turn himself to me. I looked at his glance; it was full of mildness, gentleness, and love. It penetrated me. I felt how it loosed

the bands which held my eye and my soul fettered. A shudder seized me. My God and my Saviour! It was not the idle play of the imagination! Thus, thus hast thou looked upon me! Thus, thus have I experienced in the emancipated soul, as thou drovest the troubling spirit out of it, and as, healed and happy, it sank down at thy feet.

"But, ah! this emancipation could not be my part on earth. I was come into the world two thousand years too late for a miraculous age—miracles are no longer worked.

"I was recovered. The old man besought me to remain with him. I consented willingly. The life which I led with him, but still more he himself, began to please me greatly. I wrote a letter to my parents, to make their minds easy regarding my sudden disappearance, and assigned as the pretext for my lengthened absence, a residence with a friend in the country.

"My dangerous baptism had brought about a kind of revolution in me. My past life lay behind me like a dream filled with painful, confused pictures. The demon which tortured me lived, it is true, still in me; but removed from the social intercourse of mankind, I still felt his power less, and I rejoiced myself heartily to see mankind no more, and no more to be seen by them.

"The old man was to me something supernatural; his whole life and his exterior reminded me much more of a spirit of the mountain than of a man; and his firm, decided action, and his care for me, as well as his surpassing wisdom, of which I saw proofs every hour, gave him a power over me which was good for me.

"The new life which I led refreshed me, both body and soul. I helped the old man at his fishing, accompanied him on his long wanderings through the surrounding country, and was perpetually occupied.

"I wished most fervently to know who the old man really was; he never spoke, however, of himself, and I did not venture to question him. I called him 'old man,' and he called me 'young fellow,' and the relation between us resembled each day more and more that of father and son. I had for a long time determined to speak with the old man of my soul's malady, and of the cause which occasioned me to leap into the gulf. One day at length I gained courage, and had

advanced to the introduction of my purpose, when at the very beginning of my description of my state of mind, my grey-headed friend interrupted me.

“ ‘Yes,’ said he, ‘I know; I have already remarked it.’

“ Hereupon he began himself to question; and inquired into my thoughts, my feelings, to the most secret folds of my heart. I endured pangs of martyrdom during this conversation, and yet patiently bore the anatomical knife, whose edge I felt at work in my innermost being. I knew that it was best for me, and I conquered my feelings of false shame.

“ ‘Young fellow,’ said the old man at length, after he had questioned and I had answered, ‘thou describest with deep truth the experience of a state which is not unknown to me. Somewhat similar to this led me to the life which I now—yet it is needless to talk of it. It is a strange thing, a very strange thing, this malady,’ continued he, as he covered his eyes with his hands, ‘strange to see from what various causes it is produced, and in what various individuals it can take root. Addison and Cowper, the most beautiful spirits of their age, suffered from this Alp, as well as many a dunder-head; mighty monarchs as well as poor bunglers like you and me. Nay, how many do we not find in every-day life who secretly suffer therefrom? In how many persons that seems to be *hauteur* which in fact is only bashfulness—in how many foolhardiness what is only a mask to conceal the want of repose and self-possession? How often should one sympathise when one accuses?’

“ The old man paused for a moment, and then continued :

“ ‘I will not say to you, young fellow, as many a one has done—everything may be conquered, if people have only the will and courage for it, and so on. There are certainly many maladies of the soul which may be cured by courage, determined will, and prudence; but there are others also which defy all our endeavours, and accompany us to the grave. Yet that ought not to cast us down, and make us ungrateful to God for his most beautiful gift—life. If we are not able to eradicate our sickness, there are still means of mitigating its pain—means which place us in a condition to enjoy the manifold delights of earth in the same degree as they whom nature has abundantly supplied with her best gifts. We will take a review of these means. But, uff!

young fellow, we will first take a review of our supper; afterwards, when the stars sparkle above our heads, we will speak further upon our afflictions.'

"When the stars had lighted their lamps and the song of the birds was hushed, we seated ourselves upon the mossy piece of rock before the grotto. The still glimmering fire of the grotto threw an uncertain light upon the moorland around; the cricket sang its descant to the bass-song of the waterfall, and the deep firm voice of the old man overpowered them both.

"'In former times,' said he, 'it was the fashion to become hermits, and flee from mankind in order to prepare for heaven; in our times people appear to know no other way to to happiness but through social life, especially if one has some property or is come of what is called a good family, then one is as good as doomed to slavery with one's intercourse with mankind. And now! how many people there are—one may begin with them where one will—who are not at all suited to it? And why do they set such narrow limits to human activity? Here also on earth are there a many habitations, and various modes of life and various employments for the variety of individuals.

"'Philoctetes, with his disgusting wound on his leg, found among the solitary cliffs of Lemnos animals that loved him, and by winning his bread in the sweat of his brow, an enjoyment of life which had been denied to him among men. Alone with himself and nature, but above all things, with the great Spirit of the world, whose breath poured itself through all he saw, the fresh fountain of life flowed even for him, and he loved life! And who indeed can deny that for those who have a wound—be it of body or of mind—it is not best to escape from the eyes and the condolence of mankind, and to seek consolation in eternal nature!'

"The old man looked with quiet emotion to the beaming world above us, and folded his hands.

"'There lies,' said he, after a short silence, 'in the starry heaven above us, in the immeasurable prospect which its immortality lends to us, a certain something before which our own cares and afflictions appear very small—and that is good!' exclaimed he, lifting up his tearful eyes to the friendly lights of heaven.

“‘To live with nature in her simple accompaniments,’ continued the old man, ‘that is a balsam for soul and body—that is a happy life! Neither is it of necessity that such a life should pass uselessly to others. Assemble animals around you like Philoctetes, which will love you and become attached to you. Are you rich, either in money or mind, be an unknown benefactor to mankind. And if you have lived only upon earth to purify and to ennoble your own heart, then certainly you have not lived in vain—at least not for heaven.

“‘If you cannot live in the society of men, live at least with them in their works, and learn to love them in their books. It is a glorious thing to think with and to have intercourse with the first spirits of earth, to be able to accompany them on their wandering through life, and on their way to heaven.

“‘It is beautiful to illuminate the night of earth by their beams, kindled in their own peculiar light; and to be able to contemplate the world from a higher point of view.

“‘That which for the most part opposes our earthly happiness, is that we seek for it in that which is impossible to us. Whatever we cast our desires upon—even if it be as unattainable as the Northern Light—that we will have—that we strive after, and the world can offer us nothing worth even a wish except this one thing alone. We leap towards the sting till it wounds us. The bold and happy strength which can defy and conquer, may with justice maintain the contest; but the greater number act wisely, by resigning in time, and seeking to reach their goal—happiness and freedom—by some other way. We must bear in mind that we are not combating against an enemy, but generally speaking, against the wise will of God, when we are bent upon obtaining that in which neither our social position nor our natural abilities can succeed. Much wiser would it be to see in these circumstances an ordination of the Almighty, and to follow whither His hand leads us, even were it ever so much opposed to our wishes and inclinations. There is a haven, a lovely untempested haven where—uff! would he have wife and child! Drop that entirely, young fellow, and don’t think about a wife if a wife will not have you! There is no true pleasure without resignation. If a man have not courage

to renounce something—Uff! then he is, and must remain, a poor unfortunate!

“I covered my face with both my hands, and the old man continued in a gentler tone :

“‘I confess that renunciation is not easy ; it is difficult to make a sacrifice. It demands strength and determination. It is beautiful, a wife—a wife who leaned herself on my breast—with rosy cheeks and loving voice—a wife, with a child in her arms—my wife and my child!——’

“The old man had spoken these words so completely as if carried away by sweet and bitter remembrance, that he had forgotten my presence ; he quickly, however, endeavoured to master his feelings, and exclaimed—‘Uff! I fancy, young fellow, you are weeping—Fy! Come, let us go to rest! It is already late!’ and, thus grumbling, he returned into the grotto.

“After this conversation the old man was unusually still and serious for several days. The month of August was drawing to its close, and bringing with it cold nights and shorter days.

“‘It is time for me to be setting out,’ said the old man one day ; ‘but, young fellow, you must not ask me whither! But come, however, next summer, and seek me again here, yet not in such a way as that I shall have occasion to wring out my grey coat again in receiving you—come and visit me like a reasonable person. If I am yet living on the earth, you will again find me here.’

“We sate upon a piece of rock above the waterfall. The descending sun changed waves and foam into glittering silver. I had sunk down at the feet of the old man. My heart was this evening light and easy, and I observed with pleasure and reverence the strong, broad countenance of the old man, and his high forehead garlanded with silver hair, as with an expression of piety he looked in the direction of the setting sun. He laid his brown hand upon my head, and said half gaily and half with emotion, ‘Uff! young fellow, you have been a vagrant long enough ; to-morrow you must leave me, and return soberly home again. Uff! young fellow, keep your mouth shut, and don’t say a word about the old man, or else the devil fetch him!’

“The old man spoke these words with such a thundering

voice, and such wildly glancing eyes, that I looked at him in astonishment.

“ ‘Well, well!’ continued he mildly, and with his customary smile, ‘it is not so dangerous if you only keep silent—nothing so bad will befall him.’

“After this he gave me much fatherly counsel for the future. He advised me to renounce the social life of cities for a considerable time; to live in the country, to make use of much exercise; to occupy myself incessantly, and so on.

“ ‘The best way,’ continued he, ‘to stifle the demons of embarrassment and false shame is to treat them with the greatest contempt, and to permit them on no condition to disturb our soul’s peace. There are many ghosts—believe, in this respect, a friend who has had experience—which govern us despotically, till we look them sharply in the face, illumine them with the light of our reason, and ask from them, Who are you? Then we see nothing but shapes of vapour, phantoms that have no endurance; dissonances which cease as soon as the human soul casts off the earthly fetters.’

“These were the last words of the old man. The next day we separated. After an interval of a year I sought him in the same spot. Snakes crept about in the grotto; its friendly genius was not there.

“After taking leave of the old man, I returned to my family, without having formed any determined plan for my future life. I felt myself better; I fancied myself stronger. I loved domestic life; I loved mankind; I was attached to my own family, and would not willingly separate from them; I wished to make one trial of myself in the world. But scarcely did I find myself in my former circumstances, than my former malady returned with all its sufferings. Once again I was a torment to myself and to those with whom I had intercourse. My nights were without sleep, and my short slumbers were disturbed by wild dreams. I fell off visibly. Horrible visions floated around me, and chased me as it were through fire and water. They fashioned themselves at length to one fixed idea; waking or sleeping, working or resting, I saw perpetually two flaming, penetrating spectral eyes incessantly rivetted upon me, with all that

power which is ascribed to the eyes of the snake when it looks upon its prey. I feared to become raving mad—feared, however, is not the word—I was too unhappy to fear anything, least of all absence of mind.

“I recollected very well the words and prescription of the old man, but I wanted strength to comply with them. I feared that at every step an abyss would open at my feet. I had a younger brother; he was good and beautiful as an angel. He loved me. I had been his instructor; I could be so no longer; but he attached himself to me nevertheless. I infected him, and his demeanour by degrees acquired all the instability of mine. I wished to die—I could not! I wished to go—I had not the power! That demon had taken possession of me which Goethe makes to speak thus:*

He who is in my possessing,
 In the world has no more blessing;
 Endless night o'er him impending,
 No sun rising nor descending;
 And in mind accomplished fully,
 Only darkness breedeth dully:
 And he knows, of all life's gaining,
 Nothing is for his obtaining.
 Good and ill are but ideal,
 Want he knows 'mid plenty real;
 Be it joy, or be it sorrow,
 He defers it till to-morrow;
 To the future only steady,
 Thus he can be never ready.

Is it going? or abiding?
 Power he has not of deciding;
 On the beaten track he keepeth;
 Tottering on, he feebly creepeth.
 Still a deeper maze pursuing;
 Everything obliquely viewing,
 Others and himself oppressing,
 Breathing, yet scarce life possessing;
 Life and death thus strangely twined,
 Not despairing, nor resigned.
 Thus a pauseless roll and ranging,
 Painful suff'rance, wilful changing.
 Now released, and now oppressed,
 Sleep but half—refreshless rest—
 Rivet him in his position,
 And prepare him for perdition.

“Unblessed spirits! I could exclaim with Faust, Alas!

* See Faust, Second Part. The demon here is Care.

that I could not also say with him in the moment when, breathed upon by Care, he becomes blind :

The night seems doubly dark to press upon me,
But in my inmost soul a clear light shines,
And what I thought I hasten to perfect.

“ One evening as I sate in my chamber sunk in gloomy melancholy, there fell into my hand—I do not remember in what manner—a legend of St. Rochus. I will repeat it in a few words.

“ St. Rochus was born at Montpellier. He signalised himself very early by fear of God, purity of life, and industry in study. After the death of his parents, he made a gift of his great wealth to a poor relation; and taking the pilgrim's staff in his hand went to Florence, where the plague then raged. Here he exhibited miraculous activity, and performed many cures by prayer and the laying on of hands. At length he himself was attacked by the plague, and endured such horrible suffering that he could not resist crying and lamenting aloud. As he saw, however, that his cries disturbed the sick in the hospital, he stole out unobserved and placed himself before the door. The people who passed by considered him to be insane, and drove him from the city. Wearied and miserable, he sank down under a tree; a fountain sprang out of the earth here and quenched his thirst.

“ The people who lived at a country-house not far off noticed one day that the yard-dog stole a piece of bread, and ran away with it. He was punished for this theft, but spite of that he repeated the theft the next day and the day following. This displeased the people, and they informed the master of the house of what had happened. He determined to examine closely into the affair, and one day, accompanied by several of his people, he followed the steps of the dog, and in so doing came to the tree under which St. Rochus lay. When he saw them approaching him, he called to them with a loud voice that they should not come near to them, as he had the plague and might infect them. Gianozzo, the master of the place, however, no way terrified thereby, had the holy Rochus conveyed to his house, and waited upon him till he had recovered. St. Rochus then, accompanied by Gianozzo, returned to Florence, and continued healing the sick. Gianozzo was consecrated by him to the severity of an anchorite life.

“After many years of temptation, and the exercise of good works, he felt the desire of seeing his home once more, and turned his steps thither. War raged there; and being taken for a spy, he was thrown into a dark dungeon. But St. Rochus thanked God for his sufferings, and was tranquil and joyful in the midst of them. After having passed five years in this dark subterranean hall, he felt the approach of death, and wished to speak with a priest. When the priest entered the prison where St. Rochus lay, he found it illuminated with a bright light, and the countenance of the saint beamed with a celestial glory, which so astonished the priest that he fell with his face to the ground. After this he hastened out speedily to make the princes by whom he had been so cruelly treated aware of the sanctity of their prisoner. The report of this spread itself rapidly among the people, and an innumerable crowd streamed towards the prison where St. Rochus lay. He had, however, in the mean time given up the ghost.

“That which particularly impressed me in this simple narrative was, the behaviour of the holy man during his illness. He left his couch, the comforts, the attendance which he enjoyed, and went out of the hospital in order not to disturb the other sick people by his lamentations. Forsaken, and tormented with violent pains, still he endeavoured to keep at a distance those who hastened to his help, from the fear of injuring them. I read his words again and again—and what? was I not like him, visited by an unfortunate malady? Did not I also operate injuriously upon those who surrounded me? He left the hospital, he endured want, in order to spare others—he went out of the way in order to procure them repose. Why should not I do as he had done? How acted the lepers in former times? must they not also avoid mankind? and were not they still only sick, only unfortunate? I too was sick—I infected others—I must fly! Yes—and I would do so. The persuasion that by so doing I could do good to those whom I loved, gave me strength for a resolution which prudence otherwise might have forbidden to adopt. I would depart—ah! that is to say, I would bless those who belonged to me: I would relieve my beloved ones, let God do with me what He would!

“I wrote to my parents, described to them my condition, my intention, and promised some day to return to them. Before they received my letter, I was at a considerable dis-

tance. I changed my name, and kept secret the direction in which I had gone. Thus I came into this country. It pleased me because it was solitary and wild. Here I built for myself a cottage. What I have done and what I propose, that you have seen. All is my work; Becassine alone has assisted me. He was my only friend and servant. I lived by the work of my hands. This strengthened me, and compelled me to turn my thoughts from myself. My mode of life and my solitude became dear to me. I understood or heard the powerful voice of the storm as a tone from the breast of the Almighty. My own breast replied to it. I saw the blue eye of heaven so large, so beautiful, looking down upon me. I read the Word of God in the flowers, in the blades of grass—they questioned not, they wounded me not. Silent and lofty stood the cliffs around me. I penetrated the shadowy woods, and there nestling rocked my soul to repose. All was great, fresh, and untroubled, around me; all lived its own undisturbed, powerful life. I was inwardly sound. My soul raised itself, and I breathed again. I went to the church to hear the excellent Hervey. Accidentally I even made a personal acquaintance with him. He has often done me good. I found myself better beside him, and all embarrassment fled. I felt the necessity of loving and being loved. I obtained animals. Their glance disturbed me not, and they were not disquieted by mine. They received their food from my hand, and licked it thankfully. They leapt when they heard my voice; their caresses animated my heart. I made them sociable one with another, and endeavoured that both their life and their death should be easy. I devoted the half of my time to them, and the other half to my labours. It was not long before my soul became so tranquil that I began again to read. By degrees I felt—happy feeling!—that the demon which had so long afflicted me had departed from me; and in its place came an affectionate, friendly spirit, which enhanced to me the beauty of nature, and enriched my solitude with her treasures. In the bosom of nature, drinking from her fresh fountains, and penetrated by her powerful life, I felt myself inspired to poetry. In the storm, in the song of the birds, in the humming of the insects, feelings, thoughts, and images, arose within me which clothed themselves in words, and from the depth of the wilderness arose

the voice of that lately one so unfortunate, which poured forth thanksgiving to the Creator for the life which He had bestowed. Never loved I God so much, never adored Him so worthily as in this solitude. * * * *

“Seven winters and seven summers have passed since the day on which I took possession of my beloved solitude. My soul was strengthened; I had enriched it during this time with a variety of knowledge. An agreeable repose had come over me. Amid all this I became conscious of a desire for the society of educated people. I had a presentiment within me, that some time I might return to them without being a troubling spirit. There beamed to me a glimmering of hope that I also, in time to come, might be possessed of a wife and friends. Accident, a short time since, conducted a female form to me;—since that moment I think only on her. She demanded not adoration, like a queen of heaven; she came rather with repose and peace in her whole being; she entranced every thought, without beauty; my heart beat light and tranquilly before her glance; she seemed to make all that she touched holy, all her looks were so gentle, all her words so kind; she was friendly towards me; she assisted me to prepare the evening meal; she disdained not to repose upon the mat which I had spread out for her. It is she! My heart is disquieted when I think of her. I am conscious of an inexpressible tenderness for her. Oh, if she could become my wife! With her hand I should not fear returning into the world. She would be my good angel. With her the world would no longer appear a desert to me. I should feel at home and happy by her side. She gives me repose; repose which makes me uneasy distant from her; which makes my cottage appear to me poor and empty, my animals burdensome and unsightly to me. Yet how beautiful, how amiable, does mankind seem near her!

“I am not poor. I can offer my wife a good position in society. I know what I will do. To-morrow I will leave my cottage; I will return to my family, and make another trial among mankind; I will prove my own strength. Should I again find myself as unhappy as before, I will return to my solitude, tend my animals, praise God, and die. If I find that my malady is subdued, or that I have power to master it, O then I will go to her whom I love, and say to her:

“Clara—I have heard thee called so, and how beautifully accords this name with thy being! Dear, good Clara, be my wife! I will dedicate my life to thy happiness!”

How deeply did Clara blush as she read this conclusion, which astonished and at the same time affected her. Hervey had left this manuscript behind at Umenäs; and, after Clara, no one read it with so much attention as the Baroness H.

“Now, Clara,” said she, laying down the manuscript, “what do you say to this conclusion?”

Clara was silent for a moment, and then said smilingly:

“We will think it over together, as soon as Hervey returns. To be able to make a good man happy is really something to be thought of.”

“Yet we will very maturely consider the affair, and in no case be precipitate,” said the Baroness, who had altogether other intentions for Clara, and who felt herself not a little annoyed by the Colonist’s declarations of love. “What then is become of your disinclinations for marriage,” continued she somewhat excited, “perhaps you have left them up there amongst the rocks and woods?”

“No,” returned Clara; “you yourself have removed them. Why have you presented to me for a whole year so beautiful a side of earthly life, if it were not to remove my fears of settling down at home in it?”

“Clara, my good, dear Clara! promise me only,” said the Baroness, “that if you ever should marry, to remain in my neighbourhood, otherwise I shall run away from my husband,—that I tell you, and shall tell him.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

MAY-DAYS.

The Lord of heaven created all things, and revealed himself in the full spring.
CONFUCIUS.

AND the winter passed over and the spring came—perhaps somebody very justly remarks that this extraordinary circumstance occurs in every one of these little books of every-day life. But is it at all strange that we should admire spring? Spring is so deserving of love! The earth never can weary of its visits, may my reader only not weary of my description of them.

The saps circulate in the bosom of the earth. The spirits of the elements pass over it, and nod, beckon, and call to one another. They desire to bloom in an earthly shape, and each one to express their souls in their own way. The eternal sun overflows all existence with a gush of light and warmth; towards which all buds shoot forth in order to be formed and fashioned by the spirits of the elements. Quickly do these move their glorious shapes—silently, without labour, without bustle; thus does genius form its most beautiful productions. The moment is come, and nature spreads abroad its marvels. There shoots the foliage, perfect in its minutest parts, a marvel as great as the greatest in the world. Out of the bosom of the rocks springs the tender moss, and clothes them with softness. A thousand blossoms open their chalices, a mystery of beauty, for mankind as incomprehensible as their Maker. The humming insects unfold in wide space their purple wings,—they are the free-born of nature—therefore do they hum, drum, fife, and sing. All is beautiful, great and small! Every individual part so perfect, and the whole—who is able to comprehend the harmony, the affluence, and the manifold forms of life? who can comprehend it?

Teach me at least, O immortal Thorild, to utter words of praise!
 Oh glorious aspect of nature!—God's blessedness, oh the
 Eternally on-pouring life; in thee, oh Divine one,
 Live all creatures, all yearnings; live the exhaustless,
 The eternal. Thy fountain of beauty, oh pour thou
 Wide o'er the world, of thy being the light and the impress!
 Oh Spirit all-living!—God's breath within me, around me—
 God's breath, life's roses, light's gladness, the mountains',
 The world's vegetative, ay, quickening strength, good and pleasant!

Every creature enjoys its own sphere, a sphere of goodness and beauty;
 In its substance is God, thus all things are gathered unto him:
 Around him creates he a world, his own high disposal of matter,
 His own disposal of good, perfection and beauty still growing
 In this glittering and changing existence. Thus works, thus creates he,
 After his own comprehension, himself, his thought all-embracing—
 Life, and enjoyment, and good,—a harmony boundless,
 For one is the true, the eternal God, the great and the holy!

These are the words of man intoxicated with the idea of God; do they interpret the life, the fulness of feeling?—
 Ah!!

The spring in the north is not what it is in the south, a slow awakening of nature out of a long sleep. It bursts

forth at once like a youthful, joyous laughter. Yesterday there lay yet a mantle of snow on the earth,—to-day it is gone, and the grass stands green and the trees are in leaf. How the snow-fowl crows in the woods, how play the grouse, how sings the throistle, how odorous are the birches! Mountain and valley adorn themselves with gay flowers—the heaven swims in a sea of light! The sun will not go down; the night shows its countenance only for some minutes, and then again disappears. In these moments of twilight the snowy summits of the mountains all burn in flame, and fill the valleys with a fairy light.*

A deep transport vibrates through the heart of nature. Everywhere breathes life, warmth, and fragrance,—an activity in every creature, from man to the smallest insect,—a voluptuous joy. In this aromatic world, in this air full of song, under this heaven full of transparency and light, stood Nina. She stood lost in wonder and delight in this fresh, marvellous life, and her being opened itself like the chalice of a flower in order to receive it.

By her side stood Hervey. O how beautiful for her were these hours of existence! They loved so deeply, so sincerely, so warmly; and silent Nature participated in their love. All was in pure, harmonious accord. They did not speak of that which they felt for each other; they took themselves no account of it. One word might have annihilated their heaven of pure felicity. They were together—that was sufficient. Oft did they walk on in silence and intoxicated with the strength of their feelings; and oft did Hervey give free course to his natural eloquence, which yet became more exalted through the presence of Nina. How vividly did Hervey grasp everything! How important were the subjects which he handled! The rocks revealed their secret treasures, the rocking of the sea received a meaning; the paths of the stars, the ways of men, the still working of the coral insects, all streamed forth from his mouth full of light and order. His glance fell like sunshine on everything, and Hervey saw how God gazes through all things; all things proceeded from Him, all returned to Him. By Nina's side and by her inspired, he became a Skald, the ennobled one of nature.

* See the Introduction to the History of Sweden—Svea rikets Häfder.

And she! she went by his side, and listened to his voice—his words. How beautifully changed the lights in her eye, the shadows in her world! How clear, how friendly were they! She felt at heart so warm, so infinitely happy! It throbbed with gladness, and full of a gaiety hitherto unknown. Her being unfolded in such moments its richest blossoms. Roses glowed on her cheeks; her eyes exchanged their dark glance for a clear vernal light; her form, every limb, became fuller, her motions more lively—she was a speaking image of felicity!

And if this season of life's bloom lasted but for a morning, it is still beautiful to have enjoyed it; with the bosom bathed in love and spring, to have tasted of the glory of life. This ruddiness of morning casts a bewitching splendour on the whole of after-life. One bears the heavy days of earth much more readily when the heart has once revelled in the fulness of happiness. But perhaps thou thinkest differently—thou who, after a life full of self-denial, wanderest onward in the silent gleam of the stars in thy evening heaven, and lookest forward to a morning whose light shall never fail? Perhaps thou art right. I am not disposed to doubt it.

In the south, a passion like that between Nina and Hervey would speedily have burst out into a flame. It would have snapped asunder all bonds, have surmounted all impediments, and have kindled the marriage torch or the funeral pile. In the quiet, serious north, where love arose and developed itself between the two, it took, however, another shape. Hast thou ever seen two stems of trees, which, sprung from different roots, yet drawn as it were by an irresistible attraction, pressed ever closer towards each other, and united themselves continually more intimately, till one rind enclosed both, and till it became almost impossible to indicate the spot where they grew together. The two stems are become one, and it is no longer in the power of man to rend them asunder without destroying the life of both. They draw in common their strength from the earth; their boughs are woven into one common crown; the same mantle of snow surrounds them in the night of winter; the same sun cherishes them; the same wind shakes their boughs, and the same birds find shelter under their roof of leaves.

Do happy consorts recognise themselves in this picture?

May they be many! May they live long on the earth! They present a sight which is grateful both to God and man.

So deep, so still, so perfect, was that feeling which united Hervey and Nina—and precisely because it was so deep and complete did it remain long a secret to both. It did not present itself to them as a strange feeling, which suddenly arises and establishes itself in the heart; but it harmonised with their innermost being.

Nina resigned herself without hesitation to a feeling which perfected her whole life, and opened heaven to her. The memory of earlier connexions became, as it were, extinguished in her heart. She knew nothing more of them; she thought no more of them. Hervey constituted her world, her life, her fate, her all. But that word love never came into her thoughts; and as it occurred to Hervey, as it became clear to him what the feeling was which filled his heart, he then only formed the firmer resolve never to disturb her peace. He felt strength enough to keep the rein in his possession, if he could only be near her and ennoble her life; for he did not deceive himself regarding the influence which he possessed over her. But he did not call this feeling love. He desired not to excite love in her; he could not wish to unite her life with his, over which hung a gloomy shadow, an impenetrable, immovable shadow, which would inevitably present itself at the moment that he should propose to unite Nina's fate to his own. He cast this thought far, far from him; but he felt compelled to seek her welfare, to bless her with the best that he possessed, with his knowledge, with his heart. He would give her everything, and sought nothing for it. Her devotion to him was a necessity, perhaps more so than he admitted to himself. In Hervey's soul lay so deep a necessity of making others happy, that the satisfaction of this feeling had hitherto alone contented him. It is on this account that he thought so little on the return which people made him; it was through this that he did not at all read the word of love, which the lips of Nina expressed so plainly in her smile at his approach—the word love, which painted itself in her beaming glance, and in the happiness which his entrance diffused over her whole being.

But he came every evening to see her, as the pilgrim of earth turns himself towards heaven when his day of labour

draws towards its close. With a good-humoured impatience he pressed his sister Maria to make herself ready, and with hasty steps led the way from Tärna towards Umenäs. At the sight of Nina he became quieter. Clara and she were then almost always prepared for a ramble through the wild but romantic country, in which Hervey knew every track and nook. They set out; the little party soon separated; Nina's arm rested within that of Hervey. They went on in advance, for Clara usually soon slackened her pace. She remained with Hervey's sister, listening with a soft melancholy smile to the theme which Maria generally adopted in her conversation; this was scarcely ever other than her beloved brother, his tenderness and care for his family, his words and deeds, and the love and confidence which were universally conferred on him.

Nina talked with Hervey with most especial pleasure of Edla. She described her as a lofty being, whom the sorrows and joys of earth could not reach; stern and yet mild; deep but clear; concealing her good deeds as others concealed their evil ones; simple, yet uncommon, resembling no one but herself. She spoke of her own happy childhood by the side of her little beloved sister; of her long state of continued weakness after her death, and of Edla's influence over her. But her lips hesitated to express that which, with a thousand voices, sounded in her heart, namely, that she now first understood the beauty of life; was now for the first time young and happy, and now first praised the all-beneficent Creator, the giver of every good and beautiful thing. Hervey listened to her with quiet joy. He refreshed himself in her lovely spirit, which lay before him clear as a mirror. He listened with an enraptured heart to the melodious voice, to the pure and simple speech. O how he loved her!

Often did he conduct Nina to the new improvements which he was making himself, or to which he had stimulated others. It seemed as if that newly-ploughed land, that freshly-laid down pasture, the nursery-garden, needed the glance of Nina, even as they did the rain and the sunshine, to make them flourish. Many men recognise the greatness of life and the power of God only in the grand events of history; the glory of Nature only in her sublime scenes, in her dazzling phenomena. Hervey saw in human life nothing

more than what every cottage is capable of presenting; and in like manner he discerned in the development of the chrysalis, in the growing and ripening grain of corn, the power and order of all nature, her depth and her divine life. He called the attention of Nina to these things; he taught her to perceive how great, how clear, and at the same time how unfathomable, is the Creator even in the smallest of his creations.

He imparted to Nina his plans in reference to the improvement of the country, and the social management of its inhabitants, he solicited her opinions and her advice. Nina's eye for practical life extended its vision daily, and daily advanced in steadiness. She was inspired by the activity of Hervey; she instructed herself in his undertakings, and in all those which, through his recommendation and guidance, were commenced in the country. God be praised! Virtue and Diligence are even more infectious than Plague and Crime. One pure stem can engraft with its germs a hundred wild trees, and ennoble them all. From Hervey, Nina acquired a lively interest in the good of humanity, an interest which is the noblest characteristic of man.

The young friends often pleased themselves with making little plans for the ornament of the wild environs of Umenäs. A footpath was led winding down into a lovely valley, and again at the foot of a rock not far from the sea was raised a seat of turf. A lofty tree lent its shade, a spring murmured near it, a luxuriant hedge of wild roses extended on either hand from the foot of the precipice. This little spot, which Nina particularly loved, was named NINA'S REST.

Nina in the mean time remarked that a question or observation, as it would seem insignificant in itself, disturbed Hervey's repose. An expression of pain then painted itself in his face; he continued long silent, and appeared to wrestle with himself in order to regain his previous mood of mind. Nina endeavoured to be guarded in her words; but as she yet awoke that painful change exactly when she least expected it, she finally resolved to speak quite frankly with him upon it.

"It often happens to me," said she one day to him, "that I say something which gives you pain, and seems to excite the most agonizing recollections in you. I beseech you, teach me to avoid this."

He gazed on her affectionately. "That you cannot do," said he; "no one can do it. In this respect I lie under an influence which I am not able to escape from. Grant me but one request," and he glanced at her with the deepest earnestness; "never speak with me of my past life; never put to me one question in reference to it. You might easily conjure up a shadow which itself is able to darken for me God's glorious sunshine."

"Gracious heaven!" exclaimed Nina with blanching cheek, and involuntarily raising her clasped hands.

"Compose yourself!" said Hervey again with his usual gentleness. "It is indeed a pain, but not a bitter one, and I know how this shadow can be exorcised. But grant my request."

"That I promise you," answered Nina complyingly; but her heart asked, "what dark shadow can it be which can trouble his days? Oh that I could expel it; that I could place myself betwixt it and Hervey, I would sacrifice my life for his happiness."

And what in the mean time said the Countess Natalie and the Baroness H. to all these walks and conversations?

The Countess Natalie had two great engrossments. The first was the laying-out of a large park; the second the Colonel Kugel, who was her assistant therein, and rolled stones out of the earth and sighs out of his heart, all out of love to the Countess. The Colonel was a tall and handsome man, strong as a lion—*naïve*, bad and good like nature; neither reasoning nor listening to reasoning; a sort of Hercules, who, after he had crushed the Nemean lion in his powerful arms, could cast himself down at the feet of a fair one and spin with her. The Countess regarded him at first in an artistical point of view, and afterwards bestowed on him a warmer interest. "These great children," said she, "are so refreshing. In an artificial and over-accomplished world, they stand as something original and natural."

The Countess let the Colonel understand that she found him "refreshing;" he was thoroughly transported with her good taste, and so ended by falling seriously in love with her. She proposed to herself to educate him. She persuaded him that he had great talents for philosophy, and recommended him to read various books with which she supplied him. The Colonel rose every morning at half-past three, studied

and wrote, and spun long yarns out of ideas. The flax-spinning of Hercules was far easier to him. In the mean time the Countess knew how to reward the Colonel for his labours. She belonged to those who shrink from an actually criminal digression, but still allow themselves much which borders on it. Flattered by being able at her age to excite a passion, she exerted herself to make it lively and entertaining; but she did this with such zeal, that very soon her own heart was involved in the game. The Colonel became more interesting to her than all the park arrangements in the world; but at the same time she was not without her cunning. The Colonel, on his side, employed his stratagems of war in his intercourse with ladies. Each of them wished to assure himself of the feeling of the other without committing himself, and thus they passed their days in laying plots and counterplots to this end. In such circumstances the Countess was desirous of removing all witnesses as far as possible, and therefore right willingly gave permission to the young people to carry on their rambles.

But we must now compel ourselves to acknowledge that even the Baroness H. had her engrossments; though these were by no means like those of the Countess. The first was her husband. I ask who has anything to say against it, that the two were now far more in love with one another than before their marriage? The other was a yet unborn creature—a future heir of Paradise, whose approaching existence enraptured the Baron, and led the Baroness to anticipate a mother's joys. "Oh! these engrossments will draw away her soul from Clara, from her friend!" I hear one of my lady readers exclaim in dissatisfaction. No, thou good one, certainly not! But they hindered her from accompanying Clara as before—they drew away her attention a little from that which was passing around her. Besides this, Clara was quieter and tenderer than ever, and expected the child of her friend as if it were her own. Clara found herself on excursions of discovery in the neighbourhood;—the Baroness believed that all went on as it should. With the Countess and her fresh improvements she was less satisfied, and spared no admonitions in this quarter; but all these fell upon "stony ground."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE EXCURSION.

Virtue and gladness
Kindle each other.—FRANZEN.

It is a lovely Saturday afternoon, light breathes the wind, joyously sing the birds, sweetly the flowers exhale their odours.

The cow i' th' stream her body cools
And lashes off the fly;
The brindled ox invades the pools
And flings their waters high;
The meadows full of flowers shine out;
The fat calves madly race about;
The horse it gallops proud and stout,
The swine goes into the rye.

Who can remain in the house? The Countess certainly not. She chooses this day for her first visit to the parsonage in Tärna, to Hervey's aged mother. The whole family, as well as the Colonel, shall accompany her. They will go thither on foot, and return in the carriage. All are in excellent spirits. The Colonel heats himself with gathering flowers for the Countess, who shows him grateful glances. The Baroness throws sharp glances at her, yet has herself her attention agreeably diverted by her husband, who overwhelms her with attentions, smokes his pipe, and looks in the highest degree gay and happy. Filius . . . good heaven! what have we done with Filius? O, it is true, we have forgotten him, and beg our reader's pardon! We have neglected to say that before the Baron's departure from Paradise he was taken to an excellent school in the next town, where he at the same time had lessons in drawing, and opportunity to cultivate his talent in little and great compositions.

Nina and Clara are gay and happy as children, and feel themselves continually more like sisters. The Countess makes trial whether the philosophical plantations in the heart of the Colonel have yet taken root. She talks of Pascal—she talks of Cousin. The Colonel acquiesces in all

her thoughts and ideas—finds “deep” and “sublime” what she finds “deep” and “sublime;” and makes giant strides in the—favour of his teacher.

Yonder rise the green hills of Tärna. Lovely and well lies the parsonage on one of them. A garden with trees and shrubs stretches greenly down its southern side. The whole country round is changed; everywhere have the plough, the spade, and the axe, begun their labours. Hervey is in the garden with his young friend Captain Philip S.; they are busy trimming, amid friendly discourse, the trees beneath whose shade Hervey hopes ever to see his mother and sisters enjoy the summer evenings. So long as this little garden was encompassed with marshes, no newly planted trees would make progress; but now these are for the most part drained, and converted into fruitful tillage land. In consequence of this the cold is diminished, and everywhere shoot forth leafy branches.

As Hervey descried the approaching party, he flung down his pruning-knife, and hastened, beautiful in the zeal of labour—beautiful in his neglected dress, especially beautiful in his joy and benevolence, which painted themselves in his face, to meet his friends. To Nina, the words, I believe of Sterne, occurred—“His countenance is like a blessing.”

Gentle and quiet as ever, Hervey conducted his guests to his mother. In the house it looked like a tranquil festival day—all was so clean, so white, so tasteful, yet simple. A friendly directing spirit had set its seal on the whole economy of the house. In the entrance-hall strewed leaves of the fir annoyed somewhat the Countess, but charmed the young ladies extremely. They passed from the hall into the sitting-room, and the Countess noticed with wonder the elegance of the furniture. Baron H. stood enraptured before bookshelves which covered the whole walls of a spacious and light apartment. Here stood also a pianoforte and a harp, the favourite instruments of Edward Hervey. Numerous and well-tended flowers breathed their aroma from the windows. Soon also a flower of the heliotrope, plucked by Hervey, shed its fragrance in Nina’s hand. Some pigeons with lustrous feathers came flying into the house, and took food now from Hervey’s and now from Nina’s hand. Nina’s soul was seized with an inward delight; never had she felt herself so

much at home, so happy. It seemed as if a smiling angel of peace glanced at her out of every corner, and whispered to her—"It is good to be here!" Ah, she felt that it was so. Hervey's look, Hervey's spirit, had here sanctified and blessed everything.

Would you see a living festival? See there the aged lady, Hervey's mother. In the lovely, pure features dwell together seriousness and gentleness; and about the mouth shows itself yet frequently a smile, which reminds you of that of the sun. In her white dress, simple in costume and character, she is yet not wanting in a natural dignity, which so well becomes the handsome old lady. Her silver hair divides itself on her open brow, in order to cover her temples, and then to disappear under her cap. At the entrance of the distinguished guests she laid aside her book of devotion and her spectacles, and welcomed them with unaffected cordiality. The Countess had proposed to herself to be condescending, but it would not succeed. Virtue and misfortune, a strong and pious soul, had conferred on the mother of Hervey the nobility, the genuine good-breeding to which worldly accomplishment can add little, and from which a lowly roof and the accompaniments of poverty can take nothing away. Perhaps somewhat of this quiet character was derived from the pride which she felt in her son. She had not seen much of the world; she believed that in it one could meet with nothing better, nothing more exalted than Hervey.

By the side of this lady, and somewhat surprised that the representations which she had made to herself of Hervey's domestic economy did not altogether tally, the beautiful, rich, and world-experienced Countess was conscious of a wholly peculiar sensation. She felt herself thrown out of her own element, in a word, somewhat embarrassed, and to her great annoyance knew not how to carry on the conversation. The Baroness, on the contrary, was at once at home, so soon as with her fine tact she had felt out the presence of nature and human worth; and she was therefore speedily carried away in a fluent conversation with Hervey's mother.

The rest of the company had in the mean time entered the music-room. At the request of the Countess, Hervey placed himself at the harp, and his fingers touched the chords with spirit and life. From a mild, melancholy, but infinitely

agreeable phantasy, he passed with the skill of a master to the simple, profound accords which form the introduction to the splendid ballad, "The Viking;" and in a fine tenor he then sung the northern song, in a strong but melancholy tone, with an entrancing, varying expression, such as the words of the poem dictated. The life of the olden time rose in its youthful, wonderful strength. Like a quickening breath it pervaded the souls of the listeners. To their imaginations seemed

———— Thus lovely the song of the waves,
As they rock in the wild foaming sea.

Ah!—

They come from the distant—distant strand,
They know no fetter—they know no band,
In the sea.

Philip's eyes flashed at Hervey's song; even Clara's pious glance kindled with an unwonted feeling. Nina had cast down her eyelids; the long dark lashes concealed the expression of her gaze: she was silent, but the song seized mightily on her soul, yet not so as it did on a former occasion. There was a strange sensation in her heart, but it was good.

"Where is Maria?"

I am at this moment a little ashamed of Maria, since no one can look less festively arrayed than she. She will only prepare a banquet for those who have forgotten themselves. She stands still and hot at the oven, and bakes fine bread. The greatest consternation shows itself in her countenance, while in the deepest anxiety she gazes round her with the words—"Our maid-servants are gone out! The house full of guests! The Countess! Supper! I here! white bread must be baked, and both girls are out."

I will venture to assert that none of my fair readers will peruse this without the greatest sympathy for Maria, and even a little sympathetic distress. If they wish, however, to get rid of this distress, it is only necessary to accompany me a little further. Maria, between her oven and her anxiety, would have lost her wits, if her brother, like a consoling angel, had not suddenly made his appearance, and with friendly words, active help, and pleasant jokes, put to flight her trouble. She took courage,—all will go well; and from this it came to pass that the baking turned out so admirably,

for in fact when the cakes in the oven rise well, the heart of the housewife rises with them. Maria felicitated herself on being able to treat her guests with her beautiful white bread, particularly the lovely Nina, whom with a maiden's enthusiasm she admired. For her was an especial cake baked.

Maria speedily spread the cloth in the dining-room, and her brother spoke courage to her. He himself helped to cut bread, and to set on the table the dishes of curd, so that his sister became quite easy and cheerful. Will you see Maria? She is like a thousand others—fair, kind, blue-eyed, of features by no means remarkable, but with an expression of good nature. Her dress was something worn, but far from being worn out; a warm heart, a good understanding, in whose joys housekeeping and heaven occupy the whole space, without much fascination; diligent, conscientious, affectionate, indefatigable—the first up, the last to bed; you see, in a word, before you one of the many who live for others—of those who will probably think for the first time of themselves when the Lord of the world says to them—“Thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” But for such an one what joy can there probably be, except that of being able yet more freely to live and work for those that she loves?

But we loiter—Maria does not. She has set the cold roast meat, the steaming potatoes, and the fresh butter, on the table; she has conducted the guests into the dining-room, and has invited them kindly, and with some little pride in her arrangements, to partake, and wishes that they may enjoy the repast.

Here also the Countess found none of her expectations realised, and saw not the smallest thing at which she could smile. For here all was too pretensionless and too good. The meal resembled rather an idyllean banquet than a supper “at the Countess’s visit.” And in truth the milk, with the excellent cream, she found, as well as the rest, so delicious after the long walk, that she bestowed a particular attention upon the dish. It did not escape her, however, that Hervey was more gay and social than usual. He looked around him as if he would bless everybody. But while all are eating, chatting, and laughing, I will make a little digression and say a word with the

FATHERS OF FAMILIES.

Thou who sittest at thy table like a thunder-cloud charged with lightning, and scolest the wife and the cook about the dinner, so that the morsel sticks in the throat of the mother and children,—thou who makest unhappy wife and child and servants,—thou who preparest for every dish a bitter sauce out of thy gall—shame and indigestion to thee!

BUT—

Honour and long life to a good stomach, and especially all good to thee who sittest at thy table like bright sunshine; thou who lookest round thee to bless the enjoyment of thy family—by thy friendly glance, thy kind speech, callest forth sportiveness and appetite, and thereby lendest to the gifts of God a better strength, a finer flavour, than the profoundest art of the cook is able to confer upon them—honour to thee, and joys in abundance. May goodwill ever spread the table for thee; may friendly faces ever sit round thy dishes! Honour and joy to thee!

And now back again to the parsonage. Baron H. felt himself so unusually exhilarated that he suddenly to the horror of everybody burst forth with a terrible song, at which every one laughed except his wife, who pulled him by the ear. After he had finished it, he bowed with great gravity to the ringing peal of applause, and begged of Nina also to gratify the company with a song. Nina blushed and would decline it, but—stimulated by the Countess, who felt herself somewhat wounded that the Baron had not first made such a request from herself, and overwhelmed with solicitations—she finally consented, and sang with a somewhat tremulous voice the beautiful song of Franzén:

Yield thyself not to the pressure of Care!

Hervey immediately fell in with his fine tenor, at first only as it seemed to support the voice of Nina. She thanked him with a gentle nod. Her voice became firmer, her cheeks flushed, her eyes beamed with joy. Hereupon Hervey raised his voice more and more, he followed hers no longer, but rather bore it on—a finer harmony no one had ever heard. All hearts were enlivened. Involuntarily first one and then another voice joined in the singing; and if the Baroness had not expressively pinched the arm of her husband, it would .

have been difficult to have restrained him from bursting out at the top of his voice with the words,

Virtue and gladness
Kindle each other!

At the last verse, however, he was no longer able to withstand the temptation. All respect for the fine art was swallowed up in the vivid feeling of actuality, and at the words,

After an evening,

the Baroness pinched the arm of her husband in vain; he only screamed the louder,

Temperate enjoyment;

she therefore took her part, and also began to accompany the singing. The Colonel let his deep but good bass resound, and the whole company sang in chorus:

Cordially ended,
Slumber we softly and waken refreshed.

How delighted, and how heartily after this all shook hands at parting need scarcely be remarked. But we must say a word regarding the parting of Nina from Hervey's mother, since this consisted in a wordless scene, which is better than words calculated to bring people closer to each other. We have already remarked that the old lady attached but little value to purely external advantages; towards beauty, however, especially when this was the expression of a lovely soul, she felt herself weak; and Nina's appearance, manner, and singing, had this evening made upon her the most vivid impression. When, therefore, Nina approached her to take leave, the old lady gently put her arm round her slender waist, led her nearer to the window, and regarded her long with the deepest interest. Nina blushed; and as the old lady with a serious and almost motherly expression kissed her forehead, Nina was seized with a feeling of wonderful veneration. The lovely and high-born daughter of the President hastily stooped, and touched with her lips the hand of the aged dame.

It was a homage which youth paid to age—ay, perhaps, which Nina paid to the mother of Hervey; and so rapidly passed this little scene, that no one but Hervey observed it. A lightning-flash glowed in his dark eyes—then a dark cloud passed over them. He remained standing with the shawl of

the Baroness in his hand, and forgot that she waited for him to put it upon her shoulders till she turned and jocosely said to him, "Will the Pastor wrap himself in the shawl? if so, it is very much at his service. Only in that case I must petition for a great-coat." Hervey smiled, and gave her the shawl, yet he was still and thoughtful as he accompanied his guests out.

The evening was uncommonly fine, and the Countess proposed to make her return home partly on foot. The plan met with universal approval. Hervey accompanied the party, without, as it seemed, being properly with it. The carriages came on slowly behind. The Baroness H. sought to awake the slumbering jealousy of her husband, by making him observant of Hervey's changed mood, and assuring him at the same time that this change had taken place at the moment in which he had taken her shawl in hand.

Baron H. promised to warn him solemnly against so unfortunate a passion, and if this did not avail, to assure him that he must expect to be called out.

Nina was as silent and thoughtful as Hervey. Captain S. had given her his arm, and endeavoured to engage her attention.

The company passed a little neat house, gay with flowers. "Who lives here?" inquired the Baroness.

"A canting old crackbrain of a woman," was the Countess's answer. At the same moment the inhabitant of the house appeared at the door, an ugly, strange-looking, nodding, and grinning figure.

The party greeted her and passed on.

"This woman," said the Countess, "bored me lately with an intolerable morning visit; yet she occasioned me some good thoughts. She talked with a most absurd enthusiasm of her religion, 'and of her reliance on the grace of God, without which man is nothing.' She described with the highest rapture her happiness, which consisted chiefly in this, that she had a room, and six shillings* for her daily support. She further detailed to me the kind presents which she sometimes received from her benefactors, as well as a friendly invitation from one or other of them to their tables, and the

* Swedish; i. e. so many farthings English.

like. She concluded with declaring herself to be 'the happiest of mortals.'

"When she had left me I could not prevent myself feeling a certain degree of compassion for this 'happiest of mortals,' and would rather endure actual misery than feel myself happy in this fashion. Never was so clear to me as in this moment, that that which the good man seeks in life is not happiness, so far as we understand by that the enjoyment of the convenient and the agreeable. The happiness which a noble soul strives after is PERFECTION; is the development of its nobler existence; is goodness, is God.* This happiness does not exclude suffering. Pain and pleasure are the wings of the soul, on which it soars towards its ennoblement. Earthly enjoyments are for such a soul nothing; and, compared with its life, the happiness of Mrs. L. is a pure abomination."

Hervey here awoke out of his reverie; for he could not bear an injustice, let the being be ever so insignificant towards which it was shown.

"I think," said he gently, "that you are a little too severe upon her. A happiness so innocent as hers, and which, as you admit, is grounded on the fear of God, deserves in truth no contempt. Her contentment with the enjoyments of so humble a lot they only can comprehend who during the greater part of life have had to contend with want and necessity. And is it not indeed probably the will of the Almighty that we should feel ourselves even here on earth happy and at home? Yes, how is it possible that we can feel ourselves otherwise, if we in all cases follow His commands, by which we become reconciled to the heavenly and the earthly life, and are filled with peace and joy! If in that solitary room in which yonder poor woman dwells a friendly sunbeam or a cup of coffee makes a festival, her joy is not the less genuine and lively than that of those who drink the noble juice of the grape, or weep voluptuous tears on a beloved bosom. The best and the wisest of earth have not despised these enjoyments. Have I preached too long?" asked Hervey, with a smile, "if so, pardon me."

"The sermon was good," said the Baroness H., "and I for my part shall certainly bear it in mind, especially when I see

* My young fair reader! Dost thou wonder to hear the Countess talking in this strain? Such wonders wilt thou often stumble upon in the world.

Mrs. L. again. Yet, dear Pastor, permit me to make a better acquaintance with the humble-minded people you speak of. I tell you plainly that such a species of moderation is to me intolerable."

In a friendly manner Hervey gave to the Baroness, and even to her husband, various admonitions against this intolerance. The Baroness contended warmly for her opinion; she would not give up the smallest jot of it,—nay, she would even renounce heaven itself if the angels were so tediously discreet.

Hervey laughed, and begged her on this head to be at rest. "The fine, sweet sportiveness," said he, "which graces the lips with so agreeable a smile, and gentle satire, are certainly nowhere so much in place as on the lips of angels."

"I am glad of that, Pastor, and I find it most sensible," said the Baroness, without being conscious that she at the same time smiled as sweetly as any child of heaven possibly could. Clara took the hand of her friend, and said smiling, "Have you always been so desperate against the wearisome?"

"Always!" answered the Baroness positively, "except that once indeed I was short-sighted, and was mistaken in a certain person. Abominable girl! you know that I amuse myself with no one so well as with you——"

Baron H. coughed expressively.

"And with Gustav," continued the Baroness, as she reached cordially her hand to her husband.

The Baroness was now tired; the company paused till the carriages came up. Hervey assisted the ladies into them, and took leave.

"To feel oneself happy—to feel oneself already at home here on the earth," thought Nina—"O how divine must that be!"

Rapidly rolled the carriages onward; rapidly sped Nina over the pleasant and wild landscape. It seemed to her as if her life would roll on as rapidly—as if she never should feel herself at home on the earth.

Philip S. stooped and plucked a little flower, which had slowly raised itself again from the pressure of Nina's foot. He kissed it, and concealed it in his bosom.

The two friends now went back, and in order the sooner

to reach home, struck across the meadows by a footpath. Philip talked with Hervey of his future plans; of the journey to Stockholm, which was now before him, in order to take possession of the rich inheritance fallen to him from an uncle. The sound of a carriage interrupted the conversation of the friends, and occasioned them to turn their gaze toward the highway, where a traveller was driving briskly on in his caleche. The traveller seemed to be equally observant of the pedestrians. He stopped, sprang from the carriage, and hastened to meet the friends at the stile.

"Ah!" said Philip animatedly, "it is my friend Löfvenheim, the new proprietor in this country. He has promised to spend some days with me. Come, Edward, I must make you acquainted with one another."

Edward had in the mean time fixed his eyes keenly on the stranger, and said hastily, "Not now;—another time. Good night!"

With these words he drew his arm out of Philip's, bowed, and departed. Philip, somewhat amazed at this unwonted unfriendliness, advanced towards his friend, and bade him heartily welcome. Scarcely were the first salutations exchanged, when the latter asked, "Who was the man that just now left you, and left you so suddenly? His gait, and a certain movement of his head, remind me vividly of one with whom formerly I was very well acquainted."

Philip named Edward Hervey, and proceeded as he always did, when the conversation turned on his friend, to speak of him in the most encomiastic terms. Löfvenheim listened in silence, and then said, "I was mistaken then. I shall be glad to be better acquainted with him."

At the same instant was heard a wild cry of a child, and immediately thereupon the words, "Help! help! Save the boy! Ah! the mill-wheel! He goes under the mill-wheel!"

"That comes from the waterfall," said Philip; "a child has certainly fallen in!" Both of them ran to the waterfall. The voices of women exclaimed aloud, "Ah! he will be crushed! God help him!"

The friends arrived at the waterfall just as Hervey, battling with the flood at the danger of his life, seized a little boy who was in the very act of passing under the mill-wheel. Two

minutes afterwards he stood again on the shore dripping and panting, but happy. An oldish, little, meagre man stood before him. The man was beside himself with distraction and joy, and was scarcely able to articulate the words, "My child! my child!"

Hervey took the yet lifeless child on his knee, and rubbed his breast and stomach with his hand, whilst he watched attentively his death-pale countenance. During this humane occupation Hervey himself was exposed, without knowing it, to a most keen examination. Löfvenheim, whose disposition and look were distinguished by a peculiar coldness, riveted incessantly his dark grey eyes upon him. Hervey, before he sprung into the water, had pulled off his coat. His breast was bare, and a scar showed itself upon it. Löfvenheim's gaze fell from his countenance to his breast, and riveted itself on the scar. "It is he! Yes, it is he!" said he, half aloud.

In the mean time Hervey had succeeded in restoring the boy to consciousness. A stream of water poured from his mouth, his bosom heaved violently, and he opened a pair of large blue eyes. With some directions for the further treatment of the boy he delivered him to his father. The man now turned his eyes from the child to his saviour; suddenly he seemed no longer to understand what he said to him, and the thanks died on his lips. His gaze became fixed, a paleness more deathlike than before spread itself over his haggard countenance, and his mouth was distorted with convulsive twitchings.

Hervey was now called to bestow some attention on his friend Philip, who embraced him with tears in his eyes. "God be praised!" said he, "you have saved, and are saved. Permit me, Edward, to introduce you to my friend Carl Löfvenheim. He wishes to make your acquaintance."

"I am rejoiced, sir Pastor," said Löfvenheim, bowing with a cold glance and tone, "to have been witness of your heroic deed."

"I only did what you would in my place have done," replied Hervey in a soft and friendly manner, returning the bow and quietly drawing on his coat.

"But you must dine with me to-morrow, Edward," said Philip kindly.

"I thank you," was his answer, "to-morrow I cannot. An important business—another time—good night!"

He gave Philip the hand, greeted Löffvenheim politely, and went. He looked round for the father of the child, but he had disappeared. The man, with every sign of terror, and with the words, "It is he! it is he!" had hastened away.

CHAPTER XXXI.

FATE.

Sweetest is the poem
 In the poet's breast;
 Love is aye the purest
 Ere it be expressed;
 And loveliest is the sorrow
 Which wasteth unconfessed.—NICANDER.

THE wind on the sea, the air on the mountain, the sea-like sound in the wood, the fresh, fresh breath of nature, which expels care and refreshes life—I praise you! Who has not felt himself invigorated by you, who has not felt himself elevated—when he has returned from the house of mourning, from the impure atmosphere of society, and from the exhaustion of business? Wonderful, powerful, care-free life in the air, in the water, and in the earth! Mighty Nature, how I love thee, and how gladly would I lead all hearts to thee! In hostility to thee, life is a burden; in peace with thee, we have a presentiment of the repose of Paradise. Thy storms sound through the immortal harps of Ossian and Byron; in the songs of the Viking; in the ballads of the north, breathes thy life. The feeling heart owes to thee its best and freshest sentiments. To her also who pens these lines hast thou given new life. Her soul was sick to death, and she cast herself on thy bosom. Thou didst raise her up again; she received power to lift herself up to God.

The tempest rolled its thunders over one of the wildest regions of the north. Its dark cloud-chariot careered over the pinnacles of the rocks and the abysses of the valleys. Two wanderers were seen hastening with rapid steps over the wild country. One of them was a man in his full vigour; and he

was beautiful through the fresh life and the union of gentleness and strength which strikingly displayed themselves in his countenance and his whole appearance. It seemed to give him delight to stride through the desolate country during the tempest, and to give his dark rich locks to be tossed by the furious winds. A smile parted the well-formed lips, and his eyes glanced clearly around him. The other walked gloomily and full of thought by his side. The electric atmosphere seemed to oppress him; his young blond head hung down, as if it were overwhelmed with thought.

“So gloomy, Philip?” said Edward to his friend.

“So gay, Edward?” answered he.

“Yes,” replied Hervey, “I am cheerful; that can I not deny. I am glad that I have been able to quell the tumult of the peasantry without force being requisite. And further, I have cause to be cheerful, since I find myself on a long ramble. What enjoyment and vigour of life lies there not in the free air! It is the finest cordial for man. These gloomy thunder-clouds have, moreover, for me an especial charm. Do not Ossian’s ghosts hover upon them? Was it not on such a wild heath where Fingal sung and gathered the shades of fallen heroes around him?”

“You are poetical, Edward. Over me hover melancholy images. The gloomy region reminds me of the wilderness of life. How well may the human bosom be compared to yon rocky surface, when love and faith forsake it, and leave it lying desolate. Storms are the judgments of God against sinners, or the thunderbolts of fate on the head of the innocent. Happy are they who feel neither remorse nor dread.”

Edward was silent. His cheerful look grew dark.

Soon after Philip said, “We have not much further to go; I see already our hills, the hills near Umenäs.” He sighed and added, “My journey to Stockholm is fixed for to-morrow morning very early. I shall probably continue there a year at the least. I must this evening take leave of you.”

“So soon?” said Edward, unpleasantly surprised; and then added with great cordiality, “Philip, how much shall I miss you!”

“Edward, you know it, I am rich. I have friends and

relatives of great influence. Tell me, is there any way in which I can serve you?"

These words were pronounced with a certain coldness, and with the same coldness Edward answered: "I thank you; I need nothing which I cannot myself acquire."

"In a higher post, with your great talents, you could more benefit your native land, would be able to gratify a laudable ambition."

"I am contented here," said Edward abruptly. "I only wish to be able to fulfil all the duties which my present office lay upon me."

"But you lead here, in fact, a most monotonous life, and your present field of exercise is very confined. You are so richly endowed by nature—you are so beloved by all men, and might so easily live better, might have more varied interests——"

"Love, labour, religion—these are life, liberty, and joy; these are happiness," answered Edward with warmth. "And who can say, who only fulfils his duties as a man, that his field of action is confined? The effect and the extension of every pure action are incalculable."

"But, spite of this, there are higher and lower positions, narrower and ampler circles, in the state," added Philip impatiently. "What would a Canning or an Oxenstjerna have effected had the one remained a simple advocate, and the other continued living idly on his estate? Edward, you ought not wholly to close your heart against a noble ambition."

"No, Philip, no! I also have dreamed. I too—I too have wished. There was a time . . . but let us drop this subject," said he excitedly; and then more calmly added, "the hand of Providence leads us better than our own rash desires. It has on this spot pointed out my place, and here will I remain."

Hervey's determined tone seemed to cut off all further attempts of this sort. The friends were for a moment silent, and then Philip said: "Then I really can do nothing for you?"

"Yes, you can possibly do something for me!" said Hervey, stepping up to Philip, and putting his arm round him. "You probably can! Give me my friend again; give

me the open, cheerful, cordial Philip back again. For some time past I have known him no longer; and since last evening, all your offers of protection and the cold tone . . . in fact, Philip, they have made me shudder. What is come to you, Philip, my friend? Have we ceased to understand each other?"

"Edward," said Philip, with an expression of the greatest pain, "I acknowledge it; for some days I have been different—for some days I have been miserable."

"Philip, I am your friend, and you have kept this from me!"

"I will do so no longer, Edward. I feel that it would be impossible for me to part from you without saying all to you, and without hearing what you have to say. Edward," added he in a tone bordering on emotion, "you know that I have loved you!"

Hervey gazed at him inquiringly and with earnest attention.

"Yes," continued Philip in the highest excitement, "I have loved you with my whole heart and my whole strength, for I have never known a more excellent, a more amiable . . . let me proceed, Edward! Yes, I have believed in you as in God. I was a wild youth, and took pleasure in an agitated life; you acquired power over me, I became attached to you, and learned from you the strong and peaceful virtues which constitute the happiness of human society. My faith in you has for years been my conscience, and the power which bridled me. I was happy in this faith; I would have followed you to the death—would have died for you with joy. Edward! Edward! it is a perilous thing when a beloved image in the heart of man is destroyed, since with it the best of his life is annihilated."

Philip covered his face with both hands, and seated himself on the trunk of a fallen tree. Hervey continued standing before him, regarding his friend with uneasiness and deep sympathy. After a pause, Philip continued:

"For some days all seems changed in me and around me. It seems to me as if the world staggered, as if the earth heaved beneath my feet. What, however, really staggers, Edward, is my faith in you."

Philip cast his eyes upon the ground—an inexpressible

agony gnawed at his heart. Edward was pale. He seated himself on a mossy stone opposite to Philip, and gazed at his friend with a penetrating, steady glance.

"Well?" said he, after a pause, as Philip, sunk in bitter feelings, was silent.

"Well, Edward! a man has come to me who says he knows you—who has dared to say of you that you bear an assumed name, and what is still more, an assumed character! A man who charges you with concealing under a mask of virtue a heart filled with vice—a man who dares to assert that in your youth you have perpetrated the lowest and the grossest crimes!"

"Philip," said Edward, with painful seriousness, "all this you have kept from me; you have, therefore, believed it."

"Not believed, Edward! No, by God, so miserable I was not; otherwise you would not have seen me here. But an agonising doubt has taken root in my soul. Edward, if my peace and my better life be dear to you, tear this doubt out of my bosom. Speak to me—open your heart to me—tell me that you are innocent—convince me that your walk is as pure as your glance. Give me the right, with the sword in my hand, as I have threatened, to compel the liar to take back his words. Edward, my friend, you can—you will do it!"

But Edward's clear gaze had sunk to the earth. An expression of the deepest pain drew together his brows, while his pale lips slowly and distinctly said—"Philip, I cannot do it!"

The young S. saw his heaven overthrown. Paler than Edward, he exclaimed vehemently—"You cannot? You are then a criminal!"

With his look fixed on the earth and his arms crossed, Edward said as to himself—"It was a fond dream which permitted me to imagine that I could be believed for my own sake; that my present conduct would condemn these phantom-lies. It was a lovely dream which whispered to me that I had a friend who really knew me; whom no rumour and no mistrust could alienate from me; who would believe me rather than the accusations of a stranger. Yes, but it was only a dream; it is past!"

"Edward, was your earlier, your real name, D——?"

"Yes!" answered Edward, with a firm voice.

"Were you the tutor of the youngest son of Count R., and the friend of the elder one?"

"Yes!"

"Edward—did you carry off the daughter of this house?"

"Yes, that did I."

"Edward—are you criminal?"

"No!"

"In the name of heaven prove it—justify yourself."

Hervey fixed on his friend a long reproachful look. "I have denied the crime," said he, not without pride; "and you have known me six years—that should be enough for you."

"Have you nothing further to say to me?"

"No!" answered Edward, coldly.

"Edward! is that your last word?"

Edward was silent.

"Edward, farewell! I believe in no man more!" Philip stood up, and turned to depart.

"Philip!" said Edward softly.

Philip turned and looked at his friend. Edward arose and extended his arms towards him. With burning tears he flung himself, as for the last parting embrace, on the bosom of his friend. He sought then to withdraw, but Edward held him fast to his bosom, while he said—"Delay a little! I was too warm; you were hasty. Delay yet a little—we must not part thus!"

"Edward!" said Philip in the highest emotion, "kill me, but give me back my faith in you!"

"I have but little to say," rejoined Hervey with a sorrowful seriousness. "I cannot prove my innocence. A mysterious darkness envelops my existence. My history is simple and—incomprehensible. I will tell it you willingly. Once have I related it, and then—I was not believed, and he who had been my friend became my foe. If you have given no faith to my word and to my heart, Philip, why should you confide more in the relation of inexplicable events?"

"Edward, speak! Give me an explanation; my heart tells me that all doubts will vanish; that I shall see light in this darkness, and again love you—again confide in you."

Edward was silent a moment, as though he would collect his thoughts. His eye had in the mean time fixed itself on a

thunder-cloud, which had drawn itself together into thick masses, and built up as it were a gate of honour, through which the kingly sun blazed forth clear and gloriously. This picture gave a striking image of the eye of the Omniscient. The solemnity of Hervey's brow shone deeper and deeper; a beautiful gentle smile opened his lips, and as he pointed to the horizon, he said to Philip—"Do you see those clouds yonder, which but now rolled thundering over our heads? They have now divided themselves; they are illumined by the sun, and the evening of this stormy day is beautiful and clear. This is the image of a faith which has accompanied me through life, and has irradiated my gloomiest hours. I believe in a clear evening sun, Philip; in a light which will scatter the clouds; in a rest after the tempests of the day. The most mysterious events of life have occurred to me. I have been condemned to dishonour and death by the hand of the executioner; and yon sun, yon last glorification of life, has pierced through the dark scene. This lives perpetually in my soul. Be the storms of the world's history, the dreams of human life, gloomy, tempestuous, strange as they may, there follows yet constantly a calm and splendid evening. In this I firmly believe, since it is the faith in the Great Master who, in His bosom overflowing with love, guides the development and completion of the drama, and whose hand conducts all with power and wisdom. Grateful scene!" continued Hervey, as his eyes, with beaming earnestness, hung on the glorious setting sun—"fade never from my soul! Let my earthly life be covered with shadow, so that thy serene splendour do but beam within me."

Hervey was silent for a moment sunk in thought, and then began:

"I was still very young, and had but just completed my studies, when I entered the house of the Count R. The friendship of his eldest son, the Count Ludwig, drew me thither. He fancied that I might effect some good in it. In the presumption which is seldom wanting in our earlier years, I believed so too. It was a gloomy house: stormy, dark passions had long raged in it; its exterior was a true image of its interior. Dusky and dilapidated lay the old castle on the highest mountain peak of Scania; the billows of the Sound played round the feet of its walls. I found a

son, who in the bloom of his years was become nearly idiotic through terror and apprehension, the consequences of the severe treatment of his father. The mother was recently dead; the daughter, of fourteen years of age, yet a child, still showing in her heart already the iron will of her father. Like a young oak, she battled against the storm, and the oppressions to which she was exposed seemed only the more to steel her spirit to resistance. She was a beautiful, wild, but warm-hearted child. Although still so young, she was by her father's wish already promised to a rich, old, worn-out man, who in no respect was deserving of this fresh rosebud. She allowed herself to be betrothed, since as a thoughtless child she saw nothing in marriage but a fine wedding, and also because she wished by any means to get out of her father's house. It is indeed a terrible sight, that of a man who has so completely smothered everything divine in his nature that nothing remains but a horrible egotism. To such an one nothing is sacred; to accomplish his will, and to satisfy his humour, he hesitates at none, no not the most criminal means, and finds a pleasure in making himself a tormentor—such a man was the father of Count Ludwig. I speedily abhorred him, yet I continued in his house in order to protect his child. Elfrida was demanded in marriage, and the marriage-day was fixed, when a vehement repugnance, and with it an invincible resistance, awoke in the heart of the young maiden.

“‘I will not!’ was her only answer to the representations and commands of her father. She refused bluntly to marry Baron N. ‘You may murder me,’ said she, ‘but never compel me to become his wife.’

“Now followed dreadful scenes. One day I saw Elfrida dragged by the hair by her merciless father, and on this occasion I opposed force to force; I menaced him, and rescued the bleeding child out of his hand. Count Ludwig was on travel in a foreign land. The terrified, half-childish Emil implored his sister for God's sake to submit.

“I stood alone on the side of this courageous child, and resolved at the risk of my own life to protect her. The hour of contest was not long delayed. Count R., in concert with his worthy future son-in-law, determined on a nocturnal, forced marriage; a clergyman was won over by bribery, and

Elfrida was to be sacrificed. The evening before the perpetration of this abominable scheme, the plan was discovered through Elfrida's nurse, who, drawn by the Count into the secret, was not able to support the pangs of conscience which assailed her. Elfrida came to me; related to me the whole, and conjured me with the agony of despair to save her. The danger was pressing, and the time short; if it were not to become too late, I must quickly decide. Count R. had a sister who was an abbess in a convent in Seeland. I resolved to conduct Elfrida to her, and to deliver the unhappy child into her keeping. But in order to avoid the forced marriage it was necessary that she should that very evening be conveyed across the Sound. I communicated to her my plan; she threw herself on my protection. I wrote a letter to Count R., in which I announced to him in a few words what I had discovered, and what I proposed to do, without however naming the place to which I proposed to conduct Elfrida. I left the letter on my writing-desk, in the persuasion that, though our flight should be discovered immediately, they would not be able in the night to pursue after us.

“It was a dark tempestuous September evening, as, awaiting Elfrida, I stood in the boat which I had procured, and which lay under the castle wall. At the appointed hour I saw her white dress appear between the trees and vanish again. In the haste and darkness she had missed her footing, and fell with a faint cry. I hastened to her, lifted her up, and bore her to the strand. I had just reached this, when some one seized me by the neck behind. I set down Elfrida in order to defend myself. She sprang resolutely into the boat. I flung my assailant—who sought with curses and reproaches to secure me—violently down, got clear of him, sprang after Elfrida, and pushed off from land. In the same instant there was a flash on the shore, a shot fell, and a wild cry and confused clamour of voices struck on our ear; speedily, however, all was overpowered by the howling of the storm and the roaring of the waves. It was a dreadful night. I intended, so soon as I should have placed Elfrida in security, to return to Count R., in order to vindicate myself and my mode of proceeding; and hardy as was the attempt to make the passage in the night time and during the storm, yet I dared it, and hoped, in reliance on my youth and my exact

knowledge of the track and the shores, to make a successful transit. Yet, through the pitchy darkness and the tempest, I lost my course. By a current which I was not able to stem, we were carried out to the open sea ; I felt it, but struggled against it in vain. Elfrida, courageous as a hero, and composed in the stormy night, thanked heaven for her rescue. Never in my life shall I forget this night. All around me the waves in furious uproar,—above me the heavens black with menacing clouds,—the storm howling with terrible rage,—at intervals lightnings, by whose glare the nocturnal scene only appeared more horrific,—and before me, in white dress, that heroic maiden, the angel who only spoke the most affectionate words of comfort, of hope, and of thanks. I steered the whole night through, and yet reached no coast. I knew not where we were, and suffered on Elfrida's account the greatest anxiety. Towards daybreak the storm became terrible. A squall threw us against a rock, our boat went to pieces, and I considered myself happy that, swimming with Elfrida in my arms, I at length reached land.

“ We were cast upon a small island far out at sea. Only in one direction, and at a great distance, discovered we land. It amounted to a miracle that our little boat had been able at all to bear us so far ; soon it lay broken between the crags, and the planks were strewn on the waves around.

“ We were now surrounded by the foaming, raging surf ; swarming sea-birds circled about us ; little pale yellow flowers sprang from between the cliffs, and waved in the wind. It is at this moment as if I had them before me, and saw how Elfrida plucked them.

“ The island consisted of several ridges of rock, overgrown with slender pine-trees. A fallen and deserted fisherman's hut testified that men had once dwelt here.

“ We found ourselves alone in the wide, boundless ocean : dangers of many kinds surrounded us ; we suffered want of all things, and yet were we almost happy ; for such is youth,—so strong and living are the feelings of that time.

“ Elfrida seemed suddenly to have from a child become a woman. She looked to me taller ; her countenance, her manner, expressed an awakened soul, and I felt in this moment for her something which I had never felt before. We were alone in the world—we two wholly alone,—in short, I felt the enchanting poetry of love and death.

"You loved her, then?" asked Philip with great sympathy.

"Yes! as a youth of twenty in such a situation, under such circumstances, loves. Yes, I loved her. I kindled a fire in the ruined hut; Elfrida adorned it with foliage and flowers. We partook some bread and wine, which I had providently brought with us. The sweetest joyousness inspired Elfrida. Thus had I never seen her. During the oppression in her father's house, her glad sentiments had been like rapidly withering passion-flowers. Suddenly transplanted into an element of love and freedom, she revived, and displayed the purest joy, which, however, for the moment assumed that wild colouring which was, in fact, peculiar to her character. The wild scenes which surrounded us elevated still more her animal spirits. Familiar with the wonders of nature as a fairy-child, she sprang along the cliffs, and allowed herself with delighted boldness to be wetted with the spray of the billows, and tossed by the winds. I was obliged by force to hold her back from these dangerous sports, and to compel her to seek protection under the trees and behind the rocks. And here that wild child suddenly changed herself into a fascinating Grace. She played with the flowers, and adorned with them him whom she loved; her lips spoke the most beautiful poetry, her countenance beamed with the sweetest smiles. Now an obedient child, now a wilful ruler, always amiable and fascinating, fiery and charming—she appeared to be one of those beings from the world of fable, half goddess half offspring of nature. Whilst, however, I gazed on Elfrida; whilst, lost in her contemplation, I drained the cup of pure and superhuman love which she reached me,—she began gradually to change. The colour of her cheeks became more vivid, her eyes acquired an unnatural lustre; the sweet harmonious speech became by degrees confused; and as I took her hand in mine, I felt that her pulses were chased by a devouring fever.

"The storm abated. I had climbed a pine-tree and had bound upon it my white handkerchief, but no vessel was to be seen either near or far off. The sea looked dreadful. So passed three days. Then my heart was seized with despair. Elfrida sate meek as a lamb under the mighty hand of weakness; and incessantly raged the fever, undermining and consuming her young life. She thirsted, and I had not a drop of water with which to moisten her parched lips. That was

an agony! She complained not, but ever and anon spoke comfort to me, and looked with the glance of an angel up towards heaven. She lay and faded away—reckoning herself still happy, whilst her voice already expired.

“On the evening of the fifteenth day I held a corpse in my arms. I had opened a vein in my breast, and my blood ran warm upon her scorched lips in vain! They never moved again.”

Hervey was silent. Large tears ran down his cheeks. After a pause he proceeded. “She did not suffer much, and she died happy, since she died loving and saw that she was beloved. This was—this is my consolation.

“She was gone, and nature seemed to have exhausted her mad strength. Tempest and waves laid themselves to rest. I saw a boat approach; life beckoned to me, but it was at this moment abhorred by me. Yet, the thought of my mother, of Maria,—the hope of being able to do away the black suspicion which must fall upon me, stimulated me to live. With Elfrida’s corpse in my arms I allowed myself to be conducted towards the land in which I had hoped to find shelter for Elfrida. I was now received with the horror which is felt for a murderer, and I became aware of the accusations with which the world loaded me. Count R., wounded dreadfully, had fallen on the strand, from which I fled with Elfrida; a pistol-shot had struck him. In the same night an important sum had been stolen from him, and on me fell the suspicion of these transactions.

“Count Ludwig had returned; no longer as a friend, but as a foe he stood before me. I told him what I have now told you, and—he did not believe me! He had from his youth a strong disposition to distrust in his character. He was unable to distinguish the language of truth from that of deceit. Yet I here excuse him; he had been deeply wounded, for he loved his sister tenderly; appearances were against me; the lips of the angel whom I would have saved were for ever closed, and the murderous attack upon his father I was unable to explain. With hate and abhorrence he turned away from me. Images of the scaffold and the execution came before my eyes, and I was innocent! In the consciousness of this innocence, and prepared to assert it before the whole world, I called loud for inquiry.

“ I allowed myself quietly to be conducted to prison. The courage of youth and the feeling of my innocence made me calculate on nothing less than an honourable acquittal. My hope, however, was soon overcast. All circumstances told against me ; no one could witness for me. In order to clear myself of the charge of having by force carried off Elfrida, I appealed to my letter to the Count R., and this letter was not to be found. The murderer had not been discovered. A secretary of the Count, a man whom I had before scarcely seen, came forward as my accuser, and by a mixture of truth and lies succeeded in painting in the blackest colours my relation to Count R. and his daughter, during my abode in the castle. The impossibility of justifying myself, if no fortunate chance came to my aid, appeared every day more clear.

“ During this time many an abyss of life opened before my eyes ; but many a peak also rose cloudlessly above the dark world. Hell came near to me, but heaven also. During my imprisonment, which only continued a few months, my character developed itself, and I became that which I now am. My philosophy, my views of human life, of history, and of the eternal order of the world, then fixed themselves. I became clear in my soul, and looked calmly upon death. Of the time of my confinement I retain scarcely any but agreeable recollections. Yes, since I was become strong and tranquil in myself, the sharpest weapon which the world had for me blunted its point against my heart—thanks to thee, Divine Grace! for it. Did I not suffer for the sake of that glorified angel, of that heroic child, who departed in my arms? Often in the long evenings and solitary nights her image stood before me. I saw that wild excited sea—I saw that white, delicate figure swimming on the waves—saw her grow pale and slowly die. Elfrida—sweet, lovely child! oft has thy image for some moments paralysed my busy life and active strength—oft has it in the most joyous hours, and amid the most cheerful associations, cast a shade of sadness over me.

“ The moment drew near in which the public hearing of my case should take place. I prepared myself for it. I would be my own defender. I resolved to make the most determined exertions to vindicate myself. Should this not succeed, I felt that I should be perfectly resigned. The re-

spect or the contempt of men loses much of its influence from the moment in which we see that they depend more on appearances than on actuality, and that their glance cannot penetrate to the real origin of the matter. Then, however, arises with double power the conviction that a loftier eye watches over us, and earthly bonds loosen themselves, while heavenly ones knit themselves faster.

“ Yet I was bound by many ties to the earth. My mother and Maria were come to me, and partook my imprisonment. They had never doubted of my innocence. They cheered my soul, and the thought of leaving them was bitter.

“ Count Ludwig I never saw during my confinement ; but two of my judges visited me frequently. It is my greatest consolation to know that these excellent men also believed me to be innocent, and that I had won their hearts.

“ The day of the first hearing came ever nearer. In the night before this the doors of my prison suddenly opened themselves, and it was said to me that I was at liberty—to fly ! I refused in this manner to acknowledge myself guilty. Then some one announced to me that the result of my trial would be, without question, that of death, or of a life-long incarceration ; but that men who held me to be innocent had made way for my flight, and that it was their purpose to advance my future in a foreign country. My mother and sister implored me not to let this opportunity escape. I reflected with myself. My respect for public opinion had already received a severe shock ; my honour would not be vindicated by my death. The idea of a perpetual imprisonment was intolerable to me. Here stood my mother and sister, whom my death on the scaffold would not only dishonour but plunge into misery and poverty. Whom and what could my flight prejudice ? I was offered life and liberty, and both presented themselves in lovely colours before my soul. The world is large, thought I ; it will certainly afford a place for me and mine, where hate and calumny cannot reach us. I am in the hand of God, and shall be able to earn my bread.

“ I followed the counsel which was given me. I fled with my mother and sister. Unlooked-for aid was given me, and made my flight to England possible. I went thence to India, where I found labour and bread. A written vindication, which soon after my flight from Sweden I caused to appear,

gave a bias to opinion in my favour. The belief in my innocence began by degrees to take root. The tempest which had raised itself against me gradually subsided. A year passed. New events and new crimes took the attention of the public. I and my affair were finally forgotten. Count R. recovered from his wound, but died soon after through a fall from his horse. My poor Emil had departed thither where no hard word could again reach him, and where the mild voices of angels would recal his bewildered soul to a clear consciousness.

“In the mean time my life in India took an unexpected turn. I was happy enough to rescue an old man out of the hands of robbers. From that hour he treated me as a son, and bequeathed to me his not insignificant property; on the single condition, however, that I took his family name, Hervey. I was attached to the old and amiable man. His will injured no one in his rights, for he stood alone in life, and had himself acquired his property; and I therefore did not decline his kindness; but before I accepted it, I made him acquainted with my history. The old man believed me; he, the stranger, did what the friend of my youth had not done—he believed my word. He became my father, and I his son. My mother and Maria cherished his old age; me, an unconquerable desire to travel seized upon, to see the world, and to dissipate my thoughts. I traversed as a missionary many parts of Asia; I penetrated even into China. The learning of the East opened rich wells for my soul; and not less profitable to me was the deeper knowledge of human nature, and the power of religion, which I had acquired. It was a life full of labour, often full of peril, but also full of interest. After some years of this wandering life I returned to my family, in order to receive the last sigh of my benefactor.

“I wished now never again to separate from my mother and sister. I yearned after some quieter life, after some regular field of exertion. Certain scientific works had made my name known and respected, and in a charming country, and in a circle of beloved people, I might have lived on calmly; but a feeling, perhaps more irresistible than all others which move or consume the hearts of men on earth, seized upon me. I became home-sick; for the heart is always at length assailed by this longing, and dies if it be

not appeased. Mighty, mysterious, wonderful feeling!—invincible power of attraction, who can describe thee, who can resist thee? The roots of the human heart rest in the soil of home; they draw thence their life. The joys and sorrows of childhood, the place where thou hast played, the wind which fanned thee, thy first steps into the world of knowledge, the first love—all bind us indissolubly to that spot.

“I had endured much in life, had contended with much in myself and in others,—and had conquered; yet to this feeling, which consumed me like a burning thirst, I succumbed. It is related of a Laplander, who had gone to the South, that spite of all the beauties of nature and the glories of art, he became affected with home-sickness, and desired nothing more than a little lump of snow to lay upon his head. I was like him. The wildness and wintriness of the North drew me with irresistible power towards it. My mother and sister concealed a similar longing: I would not disquiet them, nor expose them to the danger which threatened me in my native land; but I thereby fell away in body, and lost the vigour of my mind. Like the banished Foscari, I yearned after my native land, should I even, like him, appease this yearning at the price of life.

“I soon discovered that I was not alone in my yearning. Maria, young and gay, lived only in the present; but my mother visibly declined, and seemed to have lost all relish for life. My tenderness, the skill of the ablest physicians, availed nothing; silent and melancholy, she hid her secret thoughts. One day as I entered her room I found her bathed in tears. I folded her in my arms, and conjured her to open her heart to me. Then said she softly and painfully, ‘Sweden!’ ‘Sweden!’ I exclaimed with indescribable tenderness. We mingled our tears; we pronounced this dear name, which for a long time we had banished from our conversation, probably a hundred times. O it was a madness, it was an ecstasy. ‘O my son!’ said she, ‘I must see Sweden again, or die.’

“‘We will away, dear mother,’ I answered, suddenly resolved and calm; ‘we will there live and die!’ From this moment it seemed to me as if a great stone was rolled from my heart. I disposed of my little property. We set out, and fortune favoured us. We saw again our native land!”

Hervey paused. His eyes were filled with tears, and he stooped down and kissed the mossy crag. He then went on :

“I was extremely changed ; as well by the flight of years as by the sojourn beneath the hot sun of India. I was not recognised. I went, however, out of the way of my former acquaintances ; yet I sought out one of my judges, who during my imprisonment had shown so active an interest on my behalf, and discovered myself to him. He was still the same. I found in him a friend and protector. From him I learned that there was now some prospect of my justification. People had conceived a suspicion against the same man, the secretary of the Court, who had appeared as my accuser. They desired that his person should be secured ; but he had suddenly disappeared, and spite of all pursuit, had not been again discovered. I was promised that this pursuit should be prosecuted anew, and with redoubled zeal.

“I sought for myself a place of refuge far from the district in which I had passed my youth, and chose purposely this wild, solitary, and little-frequented region. My mother, who was born in North Finmark, was rejoiced again to breathe the air of her childhood. Maria felt herself happy in every place where we were happy.

“I purchased a little farm in this country, which attracted me exactly because there was yet much to do in it ; by diligence and labour this desert was capable of being converted into arable and productive land. I gave myself out for an Englishman, and became under my assumed name a Swedish citizen.

“Circumstances, which it would lead me too far here to detail, caused me to undertake the office which I now fill. I was desirous of this kind of activity. I loved my fellow-men ; I knew that I had much of good to say to them, and felt that I possessed the gift of impressing my instructions upon them. I felt an active drawing to do the state which had repelled me some benefit. I wished through my present life to give evidence of the blamelessness of my past one, in case those charges should be afresh brought forward ; and resolved in my last hours to assemble my flock around me, and say, ‘I am Edward D—— ; judge, friends, ye who know me, whether I be a malefactor!’

“I had raised myself above the judgment of the multitude,

because it was unjust—but I laid much value on their just recognition ; moreover, the quiet labourer in the vineyard of the Lord in this remote corner of the realm could not be very much heard of. Forgotten by the rest of the world, only in that circle active and known, my location appeared to me the most desirable so long as the mysteries which darkened my life were not fully explained. The inquiries from which I entertained the greatest hopes produced no result ; the suspected person could not be discovered : I myself, however, lived in the mean time quite unmolested. I became even more secure, more hopeful, more happy. Often have I during the assemblings of the good men of my parish felt again the whole joyousness of my youth revive in me—I have forgotten the past, and glanced void of care into the future. Years went by. I saw my mother grow young again, Maria bloom, and friends collect themselves around us. That meeting with Löfvenheim disturbed me ; I could have wished to have avoided it. He was Count Ludwig's friend, and his keen observant glance is sufficiently known to me. Nevertheless, I trusted to my altered exterior, and that because none of my former acquaintance had hitherto recognised me. Löfvenheim never was my friend ; I have everything to fear from him. I shall as little escape him as the fate which seems to pursue me. I shall calmly await the threatening hour, and if it comes fight out the fight."

"Edward—Edward!" exclaimed Philip gloomily, "thou art then innocent, and thou canst not justify thyself to the world! Thou art innocent, and art pursued with the blackest charges! What signifies then a Divine Providence?"

"Providence?" interposed Hervey with a mild seriousness ; "his operations cannot be disturbed by the confusion of this world. In eternal clearness He watches over us, and sooner or later restores everything to eternal order. Paradoxes, violence, crimes, and darkness, will be always found on earth, but after this world comes another—after the grave, a resurrection! That is the solving of the riddle—the mystery of Providence ; and he has already in fact revealed it to us! Has not the Holiest One bled on earth, and died between malefactors? Has He not risen again, and made the world subject to Him? Let those who walk

in the dark, that path of the divine one, look on Him and not complain. Let them still praise God if the hand of the executioner binds their eyes, for Providence lives!"

"Edward, I have doubted of your innocence—can you forgive me?"

Edward extended him his hand. Philip pressed it vehemently to his heart, whilst he said: "Edward, thanks—thanks for your goodness, for your confidence! What I feel for you will I show by my proceedings. From this hour I will never rest till you are justified. Fear not Löfvenheim; he will be silent—his honour as well as his own interest are guarantees for him. I have bound him by these. Löfvenheim requires my help. Edward, my heart tells me that I shall detect the culprit; you shall be cleared, and nothing shall prevent your happiness; you will win the loveliest and most amiable being on earth."

"What do you mean?" demanded Hervey in amaze.

"Edward, you must know all. I have not been able to see the union of beauty and heavenly goodness without loving and worshipping it. But I did not understand my feeling for Nina before I knew that she loved you!"

"Me! me!" cried Edward hastily, and almost with terror. "Me, unhappy one! that is not true—that is not possible!"

"I sought her one day," continued Philip—"I saw her sitting on the seat of turf—she believed herself alone. I approached, because I heard her speak; and the word which she pronounced, in a tone which the angels in heaven might envy her, was—Edward, your name!"

Hervey was excessively agitated. "No—no! that is impossible—impossible!" he exclaimed, whilst he covered his eyes with his hands, as if he had become blinded.

"She loves you, Edward! The sweet angel of heaven loves you, and you cannot do otherwise than return her love. You are worthy of her, and it will be easy for you to win her."

"To win her!" exclaimed Edward. Heaven and hell battled in his soul. He concealed his glowing countenance, and was silent, overpowered by his sensations. At length, with more apparent calmness, he said—"You have erred, Philip; I am firmly persuaded of it. Besides, the chance mention of my name indicates nothing at all. It would be

ridiculous in me to build any hope whatever upon that. I entreat you, do not let us speak further about it. Already the idea of having gained the smallest space in her heart awakens the most tantalizing sufferings in mine. Away with these entrancing, confusing thoughts. Tell me, Philip, has Löffvenheim expressed to any one besides you what he supposes to know of me?"

"No; and he will not. I have his promise. I can rely upon it. Besides, I shall again see him on my journey, and both by good and threatening words bind faster his tongue. Woe to him, if he loose it on this affair! You may be perfectly at rest, Edward."

The sun was gone down.

"Let us go home," said Edward, "it is late."

When they arrived at the place where the path to Philip's estate diverged, he stopped, and said softly—"Edward, I must here leave you. Tell me again that you forgive my unworthy doubt—that you will still call me your friend."

Edward extended his arms, and pressed him to his heart.

Deeply moved, Philip said—"In life and in death depend upon me. O that I could but purchase back these hours! Could I but teach you to forget my weakness—my doubt!"

"Philip," answered Edward warmly, "I know you. Believe me, if I need a friend, I shall come to you."

Yet another hearty shaking of hands, and the two friends separated. Hervey soon reached an elevation whence Umenäs was visible. The evening red burned on the windows of the castle. Involuntarily Hervey remained standing, and his eyes fixed themselves on Nina's windows. Bitter-sweet feelings filled his bosom; his heart burned with the warmest love towards her. He was vehemently agitated. Now he calmed his soul, and pronounced over her the tenderest blessings. "Peace be with thee, adored angel!" said he softly. "Peace and joy be with thee! May no disturbing, no poisonous breath approach thy heart, thou beautiful, affectionate being! I can renounce even myself for thy sake. I have suffered without complaining, I can also love without betraying it. Divinely beautiful must it be to live by thy side for thee; oh! divine even for thee to die. Bitter is it to renounce thee. That is my lot, yet far from thee will I watch over thee. From this time I will seldomer see thee. Silence, stormy heart, silence!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

PHANTASMAGORIA.

Shades on shades abounding,
 Gather more and more;
 Hark! Charon's pipe resounding,
 The last delay is o'er.—BELLMAN.

ONE evening the neighbours assembled from far and near to Umenäs to one of those feasts where commonly nothing but the soul keeps fast. But against this chance the Countess was bent on providing—she would have a lively, agreeable, and gay company. The many formalities and great preparations are, said she, really almost always the causes that our parties are heavy and wearisome. If we would permit all to go on quite naturally, quite easily and simply, it would be far better. To this ease and nature she would now give the tone, and initiate her neighbours into this new mode of society. People should dance, but for the most part nothing but national dances, and to no other music than that of the pianoforte; that would bring life into society, the Countess fancied. There should be but few lights, for the Countess had heard of dancing in a barn with only two tallow-candles, where it was far livelier than at any court festivity. The supper should be arranged in an easy fashion—no tedious, heavy sitting at table. For this purpose a sideboard should be set out; the company should eat standing, and the gentlemen wait on the ladies. The Countess hoped by this means to promote politeness in intercourse, and vivacity in conversation.

The Baroness H. laughed at all this lightness with heavy people, and warned the Countess of the evil issue of this attempt, especially however of that meagreness in her splendid saloon; but the Countess was quite enamoured of her idea of making herself popular. With a little secret mischievous pleasure the Baroness H. awaited the upshot of this party.

The guests arrived; they came one after the other so slowly, so heavily, so indifferent, and did nothing except fill the room and spoil the air. Nina sought with melancholy eyes the kind and affectionate glance which gave her life. She found it not, and all became gloomy to her. She had not seen Hervey for several days; she had expected him

every evening, and he had not come. A disquiet, hitherto unknown to her, subdued her soul. She recollected his unusual solemnity during the last moments of the evening at Tärna, and she asked herself with anxiety what could be the cause of this change. O how did she long to know that he was again calm and happy!

The company danced; the floors shook, the windows became laden with perspiration. The sun had already gone down with unobserved glory. In the saloon it was dark and oppressive. "Now," thought the Baroness to herself, "begins the free and easy." She looked at the weary shapes, that with weary faces and without the slightest sign of pleasure moved hither and thither amidst a discordant murmuring:

Thus weave we the homespun;
Thus strike we together.

The Countess and the Colonel, who hitherto had danced diligently together, became at length tired.

The Baroness, as it regarded the advancement of pleasure would not remain idle, particularly as she had promised the Countess to undertake the conversation. She brought various subjects on the tapis amongst her lady neighbours; but besides apple-soufflé and plum-cakes, she found nothing which would take with the good housewives, and therefore took her resolution, and began to talk of nothing besides potatoes and sucking-pigs, which, larded with some suitable anecdotes from Paradise of these interesting little animals, produced the best effect. But a still greater sensation did she make, as along with the Misses Y—— she joked with Doctor X—— of Umeå,*

After Nina had danced several times, she begged pardon of her partner and left the dance, which at this moment indescribably oppressed her. She placed herself at the window, and observed the forms which sate around the hall. The dark, indifferent looks, the frequently peevish countenances, made an unpleasant impression upon her. She thought on him whose glance, whose words, operated so auspiciously on all;

* The authoress has never been in Nordland. She holds it to be very possible that the ladies there are light as the elves, and interesting as Corinne; that the gentlemen are as perfect as Grandison. She does not describe things as they are there—she describes that only which she knows is everywhere met with.

on his rich heart, his fresh vigour, and the ascendancy of his spirit. Wonderful and powerful feelings sprung up in her bosom. "When shall I see him again? Shall I ever see him again?" These questions she involuntarily threw forth. She believed that it would do her good could she but catch a glimpse of the church-tower near which Hervey lived. She wiped a pane and gazed through; the evening twilight, however, already shrouded every object, and near and far all was dark. At once it seemed to Nina as if her life might thenceforward thus darken and become deep night; as if the recently past sweet life were nothing but a dream. She glanced at the dancing, heavy, shadow-like shapes—they sprung to and fro, repeating their movements incessantly:

Thus weave we the homespun;
 Thus strike we together;
 Weave the homespun,
 Strike together!
 And let the shuttle fly, fly!

An unspeakable sensation of anxiety took possession of Nina. She longed to be forth from amid the leaping figures, forth out of the dark vapoury room; she longed for air—life! A dizziness and extreme faintness seized her; she passed resolutely before the homespun-weaving dancers who flitted to and fro, and left the room, and the mocking sound of the everlasting "fly! fly!" seemed to pursue her.

Clara, who with much good-nature was labouring in the dance, sent after the fleeting Nina, whose mood she seemed to comprehend, a glance of tender sympathy, and kindly herself continued to forget her own peculiar feelings, and to devote herself to render others satisfied.

Nina threw a shawl over her head and shoulders, went with unsteady feet down the steps, and found herself speedily in the fresh air. Ah! it was beautiful without. Moonlight, starlight, and the ruddy flush of evening at once streamed over her. Pure as crystal the air voluptuously embraced her limbs. The silver veil of dew lay over field and wood. All was still, full of repose, full of enjoyment; all so lovely, so paradisiacally beautiful.

Nina breathed deeply, breathed lightly, inhaled the fresh air, and looked up to the stars. New life streamed into her heart. The load which she had just now felt on her breast,

was gone. "O my God, thy world is beautiful!" she whispered, and stretched forth her arms towards nature and life. Tears fell from her eyes—she wiped them away with her shawl. She thought of Hervey, and a vivid feeling of sad pleasure passed through her frame. Light as the roe she sprang down the footpath towards the valley, and here a dewy flower touched her dress, there she awoke a little bird out of its light slumber, which greeted her with an affectionate twitter. If one might compare the dancers in the hall with the shades of Erebus, Nina resembled a shade out of the Elysian fields, so white, so airy and light, so beautifully floated she away amid nature intoxicated with spring.

At Nina's Rest she paused. The tree had intercepted the dew-drops—the seat of turf was dry. Nina sate down. The rose-hedges stood in full bloom, and breathed forth the most delicious odours. A thousand insects hummed over them, whilst they intoxicated themselves from their chalices. The little spring murmured caressingly as a playful child; and reflecting all the lights of heaven, lay in majestic rest the infinite sea.

How oft had Nina here sate by Hervey's side, listened to his beautiful language, and felt glad and happy! She called back his look, his voice, and it seemed to her as if she perceived his melodious tones. There seemed to float harmonies through the air. At first Nina regarded this as the sport of her fancy, but as there rose a livelier breeze these tones became more plain to her listening ear. They appeared to proceed from amid the boughs of the tree under which she sate; and she speedily discovered that an Æolian harp was fastened in its top. Now she recollected to have said to Hervey one evening that she wished once to hear these to her yet unknown tones, and tears of gratitude gushed from her eyes. She thought on him, on his friendship, more delightful than the odour of roses or the tones of Æolian harps on the wind—more cheering than the freshness of the sea, than the light of heaven.

Suddenly the image of Count Ludwig stood before her soul. A death-shudder cramped her heart—she turned her gaze away in horror. She fixed it again on Hervey, and all was beautiful and good as before. "Were he but my brother!" she sighed.

At this moment there seemed to fall a shadow on her bosom and her arms which were crossed upon it. She thought with grief on the shadow which darkened Hervey's life. She opened her arms and closed them again as if she would seize the shadow, and said—"I will pluck thee from his life—I take thee prisoner—thou shalt no more trouble his days." The shape whose shadow Nina enfolded bent back a bough of the rose-fence, and Edward Hervey stood before her.

She sprang hastily up with a cry of joy. He stepped backward, and said—"Do I disturb you? Shall I withdraw?"

"Oh no, no!" answered Nina, whilst she slightly trembled, yet she gazed at him with confidence and a joy which filled his heart with purest delight. She knew not herself how it happened, but unconsciously he was at her side, and her arm rested in his as it had so often done before. They descended together to the sea-shore. He saw that her countenance was pale, and bore traces of suffering. He felt an intense desire to do her good, and his words were more cordial and tender than they had usually been. She listened to him with a smile of happiness. Oh, how happy were they in this hour—how did their hearts love one another!

They soon found themselves by the sea—they two alone in the infinite space. Silence reigned on the water, silence in the immeasurable vault above them. Silently also stood they; but their hearts beat loud. From the depths of the wood and the sea arose strange, soft, charming, and voluptuous vapours, like the fantastic forms with which the imagination once peopled them. In Hervey's soul reigned disquiet; but over the mind of Nina an affectionate repose had diffused itself, which she always experienced in the presence of Hervey. The scene which now developed itself to their gaze had always made a great impression upon her, even at this moment it weighed on her heart, but not painfully as before.

Softly and with a nearly tremulous voice, she said, as she gazed up at the stars: "What an immensity! what power! It bows me down. Behold there millions of worlds above us; and behind these, yet other millions invisible to the naked eye! there, where our imaginations, our thoughts,

cannot reach; there, in the, to us, invisibility, they wander from one infinitude to another! Unfathomable creation! What is man before the Lord of Eternity? Does He see him? Can He observe us?" And Nina covered her dazzled eyes with her hands.

"Will you set bounds to His creation?" asked Hervey, "set bounds to His love and His power to call forth his creatures, to elevate and make them happy! Ah! the infinitude of creation is, to the heart and the understanding, the best ground of tranquillity."

"Of tranquillity?" asked Nina mildly.

"Tranquillity in God," continued Hervey with the deepest feeling. Here he paused, and then again went on. "All the worlds live for one another, and operate on each other, although in an invisible manner; silently work they all at the web of beauty and happiness, which the All-good from eternity to eternity has unfolded before all created beings. Great is the Creator, worthy of all adoration,—yes! but even on this account, because he reveals himself also in the very smallest thing, and because the smallest feeling and thinking being is of as much value to him as the greatest of his heavenly bodies. The earth on which the Saviour walked, he has overarched with her canopy of stars, that his children may behold that he is as mighty as he is full of love. Ah! glance freely and full of confidence up to heaven, for it is also created for thee!"

"I believe it—oh, I will believe it!" said Nina, whilst she again fixed her weeping eyes on the stars. "Edla has also told me the same—yet it is sometimes difficult for me to bear this sight. There have been times when at the sight of the stars I must have fallen to the earth. Ah! long did all the objects which surrounded me make a most strange and melancholy impression upon me, and long did I appear to myself but as a wandering shadow. Often did I feel within me and around me an infinite void. Now it is better—much better! Life is lighter, clearer, since——"she paused.

"Since?" said Hervey, eager for the word which should follow.

"Since you have done me so much good!" said Nina with cordiality but with composure. "Since I have become acquainted with you, I am happier, better!"

"God is good!" said Hervey with deep emotion.

"Yes, infinitely beneficial have you been to me," continued Nina, carried away by the feeling which sometimes causes us to speak as if we were already free inhabitants of heaven. "Even in this hour, in which I stand here with you in the presence of Infinitude, I feel that it does not affect me as usual. I feel myself stronger when you are with me. I have never had a brother, I believe it would have made me happy! Permit me to say it, I have often wished that you were my brother. I wish to be your sister, like Maria. Oft have I felt how calmly I should then pass through life by your side, and fear nothing, before nothing more tremble."*

He gazed at her with inexpressible love, and passionate feelings awoke in his bosom. She was by him, so beautiful, so sweet, so bewitching; he now believed in her love, and it seemed to him that she must become his. He burned with desire to press her to his heart as his wife; loving, protecting her, going with her hand in hand, heart to heart, from world to world. Ineffable felicity! Already he opened his arms involuntarily, already were his lips about to pronounce the sacred prayer for an everlasting union, when the consciousness of that which separated him from her seized him with a terrible pang—the recollection of the shadow which covered his past life. With an indescribable agony he turned himself away, and said only these words—"I would give my life to contribute to your happiness, if it could but promise happiness; but I am poor—condemned to renounce——"

"You suffer," said Nina whilst she approached him—the expression of the deepest pain on her beautiful countenance; "you suffer, and are so good. Tell me, can nothing then be done? Say that it can, or say that you are not unhappy."

"That I cannot now say! At this moment I feel all the bitterness of my misery. In my youth circumstances occurred which made my life wretched, and most so at this moment in which I feel that they separate me from you."

"And why from me?" asked Nina astonished, and with grief. "That may not be. Remain as before my friend, my fraternal friend. What can separate us?"

* Oh, if any one believes that Nina does not here speak out of an angelically pure heart, if any one believes that she only plays here the part of an ordinary Agnes, him will I—him will I—strike dead!

“Can you annihilate the past? Can the dead arise from the grave, and become witnesses of the truth? Can you tear out the tongues of the serpents of calumny, or forbid them to sting? No, no! No happiness is decreed for me. And yet—yet——” He was silent, overpowered by the vehemence of his feelings.

Nina understood him not; but painfully moved by his words, and by the desire to tranquillise him, she said with feminine tact, “Perhaps I can do it. Who knows? Providence has armed many a feeble hand with wonderful power.”

“Is there a hope? is there a possibility? is there any prospect?” said Hervey to himself. “No; all is dark in the future. No, angel, thou canst not do it. I may not desire it. Never! never!”

In silence they walked on together. A radiant shooting-star spun its glittering thread from heaven to the dark earth below. This little circumstance, which Nina took for a good sign, threw her into an immoderate joyousness. “Away with doubts!” cried she. “Away with shadows from the kingdom of shadows! They are the enemies of life. Has life no oracle now as formerly, to determine the issues of mortal fate, and to give the solution to many a dark riddle? I will demand it, I will ask it in the silent night. I will ask it for us both. I, too, will for once glance into my future.”

She sprang rapidly some steps forward, took playfully a handful of stones, and turned herself gaily, with her shawl flung back, and with her heavenly countenance irradiated with the light of the stars, towards the sea. With a wonderful sweetness rung through the stillness of the night her pure silver tones, as slowly and with a comic seriousness she pronounced the following words: “Invisible power! which givest us signs through stars, through animals, yea, sometimes through lifeless things—Mysterious Voice! which at times speakest when human wisdom is dumb—Spirit, Angel, or Demon, thou who whisperest what thou knowest of the everlasting decree—hear my prayer! Answer the question in our bosoms—give us a token of our future fate—tell us that which shall come—give us a sign of——”

Nina’s voice became involuntarily more earnest till at length she trembled before the boldness of her own words. She ceased suddenly, and flung the stones which she held in

her hand into the sea. At this moment Hervey raised his arm to hold her back, but it was too late; he let it fall with the expression, as if he would say, "Childishness!" The stones fell splashing into the water, and all again was silent. The stars burned tranquilly on, and no voice made itself heard in answer to Nina's queries. Yet suddenly there raised itself from behind the rock called "The Black Man," a spectre, as out of the depths of the sea, which glid along like a human figure in a winding-sheet. Slowly it paced along the water directly towards the spot where Nina and Hervey stood. A cold breath was breathed from it. Hervey concealed the horror which this spectacle occasioned him. With arms crossed, he surveyed unchanged the strange shape, yet rather with a rigid than a tranquil gaze. Its effect on Nina was more startling. "O horrible! woe is me!" she exclaimed with suppressed voice, covering her face with both her hands.

"Believe me," said Hervey, "this apparition is not for you."

Nina did not hear him. "Ah—I know, I know what it portends," said she trembling. "See! that is the darkness, the cold—the two foes of my life—who come again to seize me, and to chill my heart. You had banished them from my existence—I have again called them forth; yes, I shall again fall their prey. Oh, what an answer to my question!"

In the mean time the spectre clad in the winding-sheet had changed its form, and presented itself now as a shape of mist. It led with it a whole host of indeterminate forms, which came forth constantly in denser crowds and with greater rapidity from behind the Black Man. In an instant the whole heaven was clouded, and the sea wrapped in grey fog. Hervey gazed with unaltered mien at the pale shadow-shapes, and then said—"So, only mist—only mist. Ah, childishness, childishness!"

"Say not so!" implored Nina with anxious earnestness. "Ah, these mists, I fear me, are the most actual accompaniments of my life! And this shape——tell me——it reminds me——"

"Of what?" demanded Hervey, in wonder and disquiet, as he drew near to her.

"Of him——of that person with whom my fate is united

—of him whom I do not and cannot love, and yet to whom I shall belong! Oh, that cold, terror-inspiring form!”

Hervey fixed a look of the most rigid horror upon her.

“I should have spoken of this sooner,” continued Nina, trembling. “I would have done it—I was not in a condition—Ah! I would fain hide it from myself. But so it is; Edla’s wish, my father’s and my own weakness, have decided my fate—I have given my word—”

Hervey seized her arm with a convulsive vehemence, whilst with a suppressed voice he exclaimed—“Nina betrothed? and now—now first do I hear of it?” and he cast at her a wild and stern glance.

This was the first time. His stern glance cut Nina to the heart; she was unable to restrain the exclamation—“Ah! you hurt me!” Hastily he let go her arm, and covered his eyes with his hand.

“Forgive me!” said he confusedly—“I know not what I do.”

“You have hurt me!” she exclaimed with a mixture of painful and affectionate joy, as she showed him the mark on her arm, which he had vehemently pressed. She kissed it.

She knew not what she did—but, young maiden, do thou not likewise.

Hervey gazed at her while he battled with the wild storm which raged in his bosom. Suddenly he subdued it, threw an affectionate glance at her, and said with a voice whose expression it would be in vain to attempt to describe—“Farewell!” and disappeared rapidly in the darkness.

The mists surrounded Nina with their fantastic forms, and folded her in their cold arms. Was she more bodily than these? She scarcely knew. Her whole life—that which had just occurred—her whole being—all was to her dark, dim, and incomprehensible. She leaned against a rock; and while she gazed silently into the world of mist, she sighed forth softly Hervey’s last words, without rightly understanding them.

Suddenly she heard herself called by name. She recognised Clara’s voice, yet she acquired power to answer only when Clara had approached quite near to her. Clara devoted to her instantly the greatest tenderness and care. She wrapped her in a warmer shawl, troubled her with no questions, but

received her as a sick child, and conducted her in silence back to the castle. Nina permitted her to do as she pleased—her strength was exhausted. “Lean on me; support yourself on me,” said Clara, as she folded her arm round Nina’s waist, and Nina reclined her head on Clara’s shoulder.

“You do me good,” said Nina cordially. In fact there are beings whose quiet care, nay, whose very presence, immediately does one good.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SIDE-TABLES, AND SUCH LIKE.

Oh, more—Oh, more!—*The Lover.*

Let us give our young mamselles
Wine and plums and muscadelles.—BELLMAN.

IN the castle, the company paused to rest themselves after an exhausting mazurka. The Baroness H. implored the Countess to shorten “the agony,” and to allow supper to be served. She also counselled her to crown the meal with some champagne. Although it was scarcely eleven o’clock, the Countess yet complied with the wish of the Baroness, and hoped that after supper things would grow more animated. The Baroness hoped so too. The Countess ordered the supper to be served. By degrees all the gentlemen disappeared from the saloon; the ladies sate still, in patient expectation of what should arrive. But for a long time there came nothing at all. The Countess became fidgety. Finally, she herself went out, in order to call upon the gentlemen to attend the ladies with all sorts of dainties. But, O Jupiter!—or rather, O Saturn and Minotaur!—what a scene presented itself to her eyes! The gentlemen were storming the side-tables, and pullets, sandwiches, salads, and pastry, vanished in a twinkling beneath their hands. Melancholy prospect for the ladies! In utter despair the Countess hurried to the Baroness, in order to find Baron H., whose office it should have been to acquaint the gentlemen, with good-humour and easy gallantry, with what she proposed to introduce, and with brave example to lead the way. He was not in the saloon. The sinner! where was he then? The Countess rushed nearly breathless into the Baroness’s room,

where she found the Baron anxiously and tenderly busied about his wife, who had exerted herself too much in the heat, and was taken unwell. The dreadful news which the Countess brought had the effect of throwing the invalid into such an immoderate paroxysm of laughter, that the Countess took it ill, and the Baron wavered betwixt the desire to join in the merriment and fear lest it might do his wife any mischief. Moved, however, by the trouble of the Countess, and almost put out of the room with force by his wife, he hastened to reduce to order what might yet possibly admit of such restoration. Baron H. said it was really no trifle thus suddenly and determinedly to assail the ancient custom of the side-table; yet he resolved to spare no labour to reduce the confusion which his delay had occasioned. He procured at the side-table, after some exertion of his to us well-known good lungs, a hearing, and made the gentlemen, in a lively manner, acquainted with the proposition of the Countess; but he very prudently restrained his laughter at the universal consternation which his harangue produced. Some of the gentlemen seemed quite disposed to protest against this measure as utterly unconstitutional; others took the affair on its amusing side. What was to be done? The question here was not simply of politeness, but of humanity; and although Eve did Adam an unlucky service in giving him the apple, yet one has never heard that he, on that account, compelled her to suffer hunger as a punishment. The gentlemen, therefore, resolved to procure something to eat for the ladies, cost what it would; and they began immediately to march out with whatever stood next to hand on the side-table. Baron H. placed himself, with a dish of untouched bread-and-butter, at the head of the procession; the Iron-master P. P. followed with an assiette of citron-cream; the Doctor from U. had the salad, one had seized the chickens, another the sauce, and so on. So it went on, heaven knows how, but at all events not "*lightly*." The young Miss Y. got only salad; Madame R. must begin with a cream; Madame T. got nothing whatever of either;—the Countess was on the verge of distraction. The ladies who made their supper in a most chaotic medley—if they were so happy as to get any at all—were out of humour. The gentlemen themselves wanted to eat, and waited on the ladies with any-

thing but "ease." The confusion increased every minute; jostling and unpleasantnesses, spilled sauce, broken glasses, great disorder, and general discontent. But bang! puff, puff, bang! the champagne corks fly. The Baroness steps in with a foaming glass and gives the king's health. The spirits of the company revive again, and out of the deep gulph of the champagne they drink fresh courage. They joke, they laugh, they grow obliging; the music strikes up, and hey! again goes off the dance; and now *con amore*.

Pity that the dance is interrupted! No, not a pity! An interruption is piquant. Travellers arrive, and the company sees itself increased by a German, a Frenchman, and an English lord with his lady, who altogether are on the way to Tornea, to see the midnight sun. They had letters of introduction to the Countess, who in her former travels abroad had made the acquaintance of the parents or relatives of the strangers. The Countess was delighted to receive them, and to refresh her youthful recollections. The rest of the company, too, were pleased, partly because two of the strangers immediately joined in the dance, and partly because they afforded them an extra spectacle, especially Lady Louisa, whose costume and manner could not be sufficiently noticed.

Although the national dance, which just then terminated, was found by the Frenchman to be "*tout à fait piquante*," by Lady Louisa "a very pretty dance," and by the German "herrlich," yet the company passed on to English dances and waltzes, in which the inhabitants of the north were as much at home as the strangers; and to French ones, whose tours and evolutions the Frenchman unweariedly but in vain exerted himself to teach a heavy beauty from Piteå to execute.

Colonel Kugel only was unhappy. He was jealous of Lord Cummin, who from the first moment of his arrival devoted the most marked attention to the handsome hostess. He overwhelmed the elegant Lord, therefore, with all the bombs and grenades of his Westmanland regiment, which he launched at him, however, only from his dark flashing eyes. Lord Cummin found him "a very amusing fellow."

People were partly so much occupied with the dance, partly with the supper, and partly with the strangers, that the absence of Nina was not observed; and Clara announcing

that she was not quite well, her return to the company was excused. The Countess had the pleasure of seeing her party terminate quite gaily, yet as soon as all were gone the Baroness said to her most earnestly :

“Dear Natalie, do me the favour never again to bring the heavy and the light into contact. It is only to bring our lords into temptation. Everything has its time, says Solomon, and so good night.”

Not that abortive “easy party,” however, but wholly new plans disturbed the sleep of the Countess. She had very long desired during her banishment in the north once to witness the splendid MIDNIGHT SUN. She now resolved to join the strangers in their journey, and accompany them to Tornea, and she would propose it to her relations whether they too would go or not. She announced her scheme at breakfast the morning after the “light party,” as it came to be called ever afterwards, and behold!—it was received with general applause. Even the Baroness would see the midnight sun. The strangers, especially Lord Cummin, were highly delighted at this addition to their party. In two days it was fixed to set out. Colonel Kugel undertook all the economical cares of the journey, the procurance of horses, and the payment for them, and so on. The Countess and Baroness, who knew that Hervey was well acquainted with these northern regions, and had penetrated as far into them as it was possible for any one to do, were anxious to gain him for this journey, and to surrender to him its entire direction. They sent therefore a messenger to him, but he came back with the intelligence that Pastor Hervey was that morning gone from home, and no one knew when he would return. This was an unlucky chance, but the journey could not be delayed, and to the great chagrin of the Baroness they must resolve to make it without Hervey.

During the short interval before the setting out the Countess was too much occupied, especially with her jealous Colonel, to notice Nina’s unusual paleness and deep dejection, which caused her more to resemble a marble image than a living person. The Frenchman was struck with the highest admiration of her beauty, and her “*immobilité*.” He discovered a wonderful likeness between her and the snow of the north. This he repeated perpetually ; and as he learned from

the mischievous Baroness that "*statue de glace*" was in Swedish "snögubbe," from this time forward he always called her "*la belle snögubbe.*"*

Nina's altered manner did not escape the quick eye of the Baroness. She asked Clara what was the matter. "Tell me not, Clara," said she, "that it is a cold, a fever, or anything of that kind for which Natalie has put her on a reducing regimen, that mien and colour proceed from other causes than bodily suffering." But Clara was not able to give her friend any explanation. Perhaps she had a suspicion of what was going on in Nina's heart. She approached her with silent sympathy, making no inquiries and learning nothing, and only with a view of removing out of the way whatever might annoy or embarrass her.

Good Clara!

Nina was silent, and drew herself back into her own gloomy world. At times she seemed to herself as if surrounded with burning gulfs; but she turned her gaze away from them, and dreamed on. At times Edla's lofty form seemed to stand forward, and to extend towards her her hand; but this image also vanished. Now it became cold as ice around her; the mists came as in the night in which she saw Hervey for the last time, and folded her in their damp arms; then burst in a beam of light, and Hervey's last glance swept before her soul; it became warm in her bosom, and she rested. Towards everything which was about her she was perfectly indifferent. Without will, and almost without a wish, she permitted herself to be guided by others; she did generally what they desired, yes, she even sang when they requested it. Yet all was lifeless, strange, and melancholy. Clara fancied that the journey would arouse her benumbed senses; she begged Nina to accompany them, and she consented.

The journey commenced in the most splendid weather, and the greater part of the company were in the very best humour. Lord and Lady Cummin were of opinion that the midnight-sun would put the climax to their reminiscences of the north. In Stockholm they had seen the royal family and the royal palace; in Upsala, the library, the cathedral, and the statue

* Gubbe means an old man, and snögubbe the old man of snow which children make in the winter; so that the Baroness had led the Frenchman into the ludicrous snare of calling Nina "lovely old snow-man!"

of Linnæus ; had cut a piece of bark out of the tree " which he himself had planted ;" and had also surveyed from a distance " the hillocks of old Upsala." Now only remained for them " Laponia," and " the Midnight-sun ;" and on their return towards England, to cast a glance at Polhem's Sluices, and to admire the cascades of Trollhättan, and they should have had enough of Scandinavia. Lord Cummin had, indeed, a wish of his own, a warm and eager wish, to get a sight of a bear ; and if it were the will of God, to shoot some of these animals. The Frenchman employed every moment in poring into the woods with his lorgnette, and then saying somewhat fearfully to Lord Cummin, " I fancy I see something grey yonder," or he exclaimed with vehemence, " Parbleu ! there goes a she-bear, with at least half-a-dozen cubs after her ;" or he said with a mysterious voice, " Hark ! I hear a strange growling."

It required nothing more to set the Englishman in fire and flames ; he would spring hastily out of the carriage, and call to his servants for his gun, etc., spite of Lady Louisa's incessantly shrugging her shoulders, and uttering one " My dear" after another.

The Frenchman, on his part, inquired continually after the originals of Victor Hugo's " Han d'Islande, Oglypiglap, Culbusulsum, Spiagudry," etc. ; and was quite astonished to find the people also here pretty much the same as they are everywhere else, but especially without that pride of ancestry which Victor Hugo's heroes possess in so high a degree. The Colonel Kugel answered only in some measure to the idea which he had formed to himself of a Nordlander, and he named him " Derstrombidès ;" but he was within a hair of involving himself in a duel with the Colonel, who did not at all understand this giving of names *à la* Victor Hugo.

The German who proposed to publish a " Tour through Sweden and Norway," was enraptured with the people and the country, and found everything " herrlich ! gross ! erhaben ! ausserordentlich !"

At Mattaränghe, in the parish of Tortula, not far from Torneå, the travellers had engaged rooms. From one of the hills there they proposed to view the solemn spectacle. The whole inn was surrounded by tents. Numbers of Lapland families, half-wild hordes from Finnmark, stream at this

season of midsummer towards this country, in order to feast here three days by the light of the never-descending sun, to play, to dance, and to go to church. Here the Frenchman saw with rapture, not indeed the originals of Victor Hugo's tragedy, but wild, strange, original shapes, with little twinkling eyes and broad hairy breasts, the miserable children of want and wretchedness, whose state of culture and inward life no romance-writer has truly represented; because, indeed, the romance built on the reality of this district would turn out tolerably meagre, and because love, this marrow of all romances, knows here no nobler, fairer aim than that which Helvetius would vainly attribute to it. The spirit of the earth holds the people here in captivity, and mole-like they creep only in the sand and about the roots of the tree of life. Sometimes, however, in their clear winter nights by the indescribable splendour of the snow and of the stars, when they fly forth in their snow-shoes to chase the bear and the reindeer, then awakens in their bosoms a higher life,—then breathe they to pensive airs deep and affectionate feelings in simple beautiful love-songs. But they soon relapse again into their dark Laplandish night.

In the mean time the German was in the third heaven at this sight, and at its lively contrast with the civilized world. Lady Louisa found all this "rather curious," and noted it down in her journal.

The weather—strange enough—favoured all the undertakings of the travellers. The sky was clear, and a silent midnight saw all our travellers assembled in glad sunshine on one of the green hills. Slowly descended the sun; it extinguished one beam after another. All eyes followed it. Now it sank—lower—ever lower—lower;—suddenly, however, it stood still, as if upheld by an invisible hand. Nature seemed, like them, to be in anxious suspense; not an insect moved its humming wing; all was silent; a death-like stillness reigned, while the sun, glowing red, threw a strange light over the earth. O wonderful Almighty Power! It began now again slowly to ascend; it clothed itself again with beams, like a pure glorified spirit; it became every moment more dazzling.

A breath! and Nature lives, and the birds sing again!

"Oh!" said Lord Cummin laconically, and took out a gold

snuff-box. Lady Louisa immediately sketched the sun, the country, and the groups on the hill, on one of the leaves of her album. The Frenchman protested repeatedly, that it was "*très imposant! très majestueux!*" The German, at some paces distant from the rest, was on his knees beneath a juniper-bush. The Countess Natalie enjoyed this sublime spectacle with eyes overflowing with tears and with real feeling. The Colonel stood there like the god Thor, and with his hands on his sides gazed into the sun as into a hostile battery. Baron H. had involuntarily and with pious seriousness folded his hands on the knob of his stick, on which he supported himself. Clara leaned on Nina, whose arm rested within hers, and said softly to her, "See, the sun does not go down! It ascends again! It will not be night; it only threatened us with it." Nina thanked her with a look, but answered not. The Baroness looked with an expression of the most heartfelt pleasure alternately at the sun, at her husband, and at the young ladies.

As the sun ascended higher and higher and the warmth increased, the party returned to the inn, in order to enjoy some repose. The hordes of Finns and Laplanders were in the most active commotion on the field. They were cooking, dressing, and adorning themselves: their breasts and heads were covered with gold and silver ornaments. A little, strange old Laplander approached the company with the most singular gesticulations. To his peaked cap of reindeer-skin hung two tinkling bells, and his bosom and shoulders were by places loaded with tawdry and tasteless ornaments. His raven hair fell down in long masses. It was easily understood from his action that he was a fortune-teller, and was desirous to give to the strangers a specimen of his art. People offered themselves freely; in tolerably bad rhymes, and in worse Swedish, he said to every one who extended him a hand some commonplaces. The Baroness did not find it particularly sagacious, yet listened not unwillingly to his prophecy that she should have a son who should prove "a great man." The Countess could not refrain from blushing at what the old man said to her, though he spoke so low that no one except herself heard the prognostication. Suddenly the old man turned aside the hands that were stretched out to him, made his way through those standing around, and

went directly up to Nina, who had gone a little aside. Long did he contemplate her with his little flashing eyes; seized then, almost by force, the hand withheld from him; looked into it; and spoke with much emphasis the following words, which had all the obscurity and wonder of an oracle:

When to thine eye death's realms appear,
 Life's great enigma shall be clear.
 When thou art bow'd and most oppress'd,
 Thy happiness shall stand confess'd;
 Then life's own warmth the snow shall lend thee,
 The wilderness an answer send thee.

After this prophesying, with which he seemed to have exhausted his whole art, the old man would enter upon nothing more; he himself now stretched forth his hand, and that indeed for money. Amid merriment over the old soothsayer, the travellers reached the inn, where every one sought his own room.

The words of the Laplander made a singular impression on Nina, and raised a peculiar disquiet in her bosom. But these also soon shrouded themselves beneath the veil of half-consciousness; and a deep sleep—the usual consequence of Nina's moral languor—conducted her to the silent flood of Lethe, on whose banks we so sweetly slumber, dream, and forget.

The strong light operated disturbingly on the sleep of the rest of the company. Lady Louisa awoke with a lucky idea, which she immediately communicated to her husband, whom it flashed upon also as “a very good idea”—“a famous idea!”

They were here so near to the North pole, said Lady Louisa, “that she could not conceive why they should not force their way to the regions of the eternal snow. They had seen and heard all that the world possessed of magnificence, wonder, and glory—Paris, London, Taglioni's leaping, Talma's acting, Malibran and Pasta's singing, Paganini's fiddle, etc. But how if they should now visit the realm of death—the eternal snow of the North pole? Then first could they say that the earth had nothing further new to them, and that they had seen more than their far-travelled countrymen.”

Lady Cummin had got it into her lovely head that the Snö-Ejällen form the boundary of all life, and that immediately behind them commences the eternal ice of the North pole. Though not able to participate in his wife's hope of being

able so rapidly to arrive at the end of the world, Lord Cummin was, nevertheless, charmed in the highest degree with the idea of being able in the middle of summer to wade about in snow, and to see the measureless, everlasting ice-plains, in which the polar star mirrors itself.

Perfectly enchanted with this prospect, Lord and Lady Cummin hastened to communicate the plan to the Countess. The singularity of the enterprise captivated also her fancy; she consented with pleasure to accompany her guests thither too. The Baroness was not without a desire likewise to go, yet she yielded to the representations of her husband and Clara, and agreed to await in their company the return of the party to Torneå. She wished also to keep back Nina; but Nina was impelled forwards by a secret disquiet, and dreaded in her present state nothing so much as inactivity.

“Then must you too make the journey, my good Clara,” said the Baroness. “You must be head and hand for Nina, who does not seem rightly to know what she does. I cannot answer it to Edla, to allow her young dove to fly through the wilderness so wholly unprotected. Natalie is now only occupied with her own ideas; Lady Cummin is, between ourselves, a sheep; and the gentlemen are all a little silly. You, Clara, are the only rational person of the whole party. You only can take Nina under your wing, and guide and support her. Will you, my Clara?” I would go myself to look after you, if my husband, the tyrant, did not hold me back.”

Clara agreed entirely with her friend in her views of their travelling companions, and consented to take charge of Nina. The affair was speedily settled. The foreign gentlemen desired nothing better, than, if possible, to travel to the end of the world in good company. There were found two men in Torneå who offered themselves as guides, to conduct the party to the boundary of the snow. The company provided themselves in the town with furs, eatables, and everything which could be required for the journey. The Countess caused two very picturesque dresses to be made for herself and Nina, richly trimmed with beaver-skin. She banished bonnets, and substituted for them fantastic but tasteful caps. In this costume, on her lovely blond head the cap of red velvet, trimmed with gold lace and ermine, Nina resembled the most fascinating beauty which ever enchanted the world of old

romance. The German called her the goddess Freya. Nina, however, continued silent, and was indifferent to her own beauty and the praise of others. The Countess and Lady Louisa, on the contrary, enjoyed perfectly their heightened charms, and the increased admiration of their worshippers. Fine masks were also procured to protect the ladies against the mosquitoes and the keenness of the air.

Besides the guides, they were accompanied by several peasants with staves and ropes. These went in advance of the party, in order to discover the best and securest route, and the company followed them, mounted on little, lively, and docile ponies, which were accustomed to find their way through snow-hills and morasses. The travellers, for the most part, were in the highest spirits, and the Frenchman did *l'impossible* to enliven "la belle snögubbe."

The morning of the first day, however, threatened to put a tragical end at once to the journey. They had halted in order to breakfast. Whilst the ladies dealt out with white hands bread-and-butter and meat, the Frenchman began again to peer around with his *lorgette* after "SOMETHING GREY;" and he spied out "something grey" too, which he protested could be nothing else but a bear. The somewhat near-sighted Lord now saw "the fellow" too, and followed in his track with loaded gun. The Frenchman, laughing in his sleeve, went after him. His Lordship was soon lost in the wood. The Frenchman was seeking him with some uneasiness, when he heard a shot, and immediately upon it a vehement cry for help. He hurried towards the quarter whence the cry came, and saw with horror his friend lying at his length on the earth, while a bleeding bear stood with his paw on his breast, and with his open jaws threatened the head of the noble lord. Lord Cummin's end appeared inevitable, when suddenly a shot from a side direction passed through the body of bruin, and stretched him with a terrible howl on the earth. Nearly at the same moment sprang a man from the thicket, flung down his gun, hastened to the unlucky lord, and with the help of the Frenchman dragged him from beneath the dying bear, which had fallen half upon him. Lord Cummin did not appear to be in a much better condition than the bear, for he was covered with blood, and pale as a corpse. Not far off they found a ditch with water.

The stranger fetched a capfull, and dashed it over his Lordship's face, who through this shower-bath again recovered his senses. It was soon seen that the blood with which his Lordship was covered, proceeded from the wounded bear. When Lord Cummin had perfectly convinced himself of this, and saw his foe lying motionless by him, he soon found his strength again, and declared that he felt no further pain than a considerable pressure on the chest. He embraced his rescuer, and was beyond measure enraptured with his hunting booty, which the stranger very willingly renounced. The stranger, who, to the amazement of the foreigners, spoke quite fluently French and English, inquired the object and destination of their journey, and learned not only these, but also the names of the rest of the party. He appeared startled, and shook his head at the whole undertaking. After further consideration, he said—"I am a friend of the Countess G., and wish to join the company, that I may be able, as far as possible, to protect them from the annoyances and dangers to which people on this journey are exposed. But I wish to accompany it unknown to her. Will you wait here a moment for me?"

They gladly consented, and gazed in wonder after their new fellow-traveller, who entered a Lapland hut at some fifty paces distance, and came speedily forth again in Lapland costume, and so thoroughly changed that they themselves did not recognise him till he said—"Promise me to communicate to none of the company what you have seen or heard of me; say only that you have met with a wood Laplander, who is willing to join the train for the journey, which he has himself often made before. I, on the other hand, promise you to be silent on the real chapter of the bear, which, moreover, would only alarm the ladies."

Lord Cummin gave his hand upon it; the Frenchman was transported with the romantic nature of the adventure; and all three set themselves to work to drag the huge bear to the breakfast-place. The ladies had been in extreme anxiety, and now regarded Lord Cummin as an actual hero. The Laplander was scarcely noticed by anybody, though the Frenchman gave himself great trouble to introduce him, while the man himself only the more drew back. Soon, however, his part became more prominent, and no one knew how

it came to pass that the whole caravan had involuntarily put itself under his guidance. He said very little; his words came forth only in monosyllables, when it was absolutely necessary, from a great thick neckerchief which rose above his mouth; yet the gesture by which, in any dubious case, he signified the true direction of the route, was instantly obeyed by all. With the guides he sometimes conversed in a low tone; but he assumed his general position between the Countess and Nina, whose horse he often led by the bridle, in order to conduct her over dangerous spots.

The killing of the bear had yet more raised the spirits of the party; but it was remarkable that the Frenchman had wholly ceased to see "something grey," and Lord Cummin's eagerness for the bear-hunt had not the less strikingly disappeared. He talked now only of shooting grouse and ptarmigan. Lady Louisa wrote down the names of many places which were named to her, and was charmed with the good sound of the words:—Valli, Almajalos, Laisan, Silbojock, Kamajocks-Dal, Karvek, Tjoris, Kaskajvo, Sulitelma, etc. etc.

The journey became continually more difficult; it was necessary now to cross waters in boats, now——but it is by no means our intention to write a book of travels. In this sorrowful region the good spirits of the party ebbed rapidly, and at length entirely vanished. The higher the travellers ascended, the more they felt themselves oppressed. No one uttered a word, and every one seemed to be occupied with his own observations. From "The Reminiscences of Travel" of the Countess, or Lady Louisa, but especially from those of the German, might we easily learn the causes of this mood of mind; but I prefer to indicate them from the page on which a far more vigorous, and in Sweden well-known writer, has described in the following words the history of the animal and vegetable world in their last sighs in the contest with snow and cold:

"When we follow the Fjällen in a northern direction, we arrive first at the line where the tannen (silver fir) ceases to grow. This tree has before reaching this line assumed an unusual aspect. Covered from the ground upwards with black boughs, and surmounted with, as it were, a burnt point, it presents to the wanderer in the waste region a melancholy spectacle. Immediately at this line cultivated berries cease

to ripen; the beaver disappears from the brooks, the pike and perch from the lakes. The boundary-line of the siver fir lies three thousand two hundred feet below the snow-line. The Scotch fir now only remains, which, however, is not so slender as usual, but has a low stem, and thick, far-stretching branches; ages are required to give it only a tolerable height. The morasses acquire a most desolate and dead aspect; not an insect shows itself upon them. The bilberry no longer ripens; the bear even goes no higher. Corn ceases to ripen, yet huts are still found, whose inhabitants support themselves by fishing and the pasturage of cattle, up to two thousand six hundred feet on this side of the snow-line. At two thousand eight hundred feet below the line the Scotch fir disappears, and the low birch is now the only tree in the waste country. With its short, gnarled stem, and its rigid knotty branches, it seems to set itself in a posture of resistance to the keen, furious north wind. Its light green and lovely colour is ever most grateful to the eye, yet is it also an evidence of the feebleness of vegetation. Soon these two become so low that from the slightest elevation you overlook the whole wood, and they become constantly thinner and thinner; and as thereby the sun obtains more scope of action on the declivities of the Fjällen, you find frequently on these declivities an excessive growth of mountain plants. At two thousand feet from the snowy boundary the low birches themselves disappear, and from this point you find no more fish in the waters. The red salmon is the last. All hills are termed Fjällen which rise beyond the line where trees no longer grow. Four hundred feet yet higher you still meet with bushes, dwarf birch, and black creeping shrubs. The cranberry still ripens, but no further. The high waste country is still visited by the glutton. Then ceases all shrubby vegetation; the hill slopes clothe themselves in brown and green lichens, and the only berry which will yet ripen is the rock wortleberry. Higher than eight hundred feet below the snow-line the Laplander, the nomadic inhabitant of the desert, does not willingly pitch his tent, since beyond this line even ceases pasturage for the reindeer. The eternal snows now stretch themselves ever further around. At first they form only isolated spots, between which, here and there, the lichens emerge from the brown and spongy

earth; soon the snow-islands press closer on each other, vegetation totally ceases, the snow forms an unbroken surface, and the snow-finch is the only living creature which trusts itself here. Finally, the snow is no longer moistened by a single drop of rain, and resists for ever the beams of the sun——”

So poor, so waste, so gloomily does nature here present herself—monotonous, but great! Great, since she is eternal, without change, without disquiet. Proud and immovable in her poverty, she casts from her the industry of men, the affluence of agriculture, and renounces every joy, but at the same time every fetter. She turns away her countenance from life, draws the winding-sheet over her, and seems to rejoice herself in everlasting repose.

The travellers grew continually more melancholy at heart; many a sigh escaped from the oppressed bosom. Anxious forebodings—the only guests in this forsaken region—hovered round them, like the shades of the lower world round the being who has dared to enter their realms. Evening drew near, and with it also the end of the journey.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ETERNAL SNOW.

Hu!—*The Traveller.*

Ha, ha, ha!—*Love in the shape of a Snow-Bird.*

THE travellers stood not far from the peak of the Fjällen. The heaven lay clear and cold above them. The icy air swept over the hill, and loaded the lungs of the wanderers. They paused to rest awhile before they ascended higher. Unobserved by the rest Nina disappeared, and went upwards alone. Like a cloud chased by the wind, like a person who will encounter his fate, Nina climbed, without looking around her, higher and higher still. THE UNKNOWN only observed her perilous undertaking, and like lightning was at her side. True and silent as her shadow, he followed her step by step. They had soon left the rest far behind them. Valleys and mountains lay between them. They no longer saw each other. A superhuman power seemed to impel and bear Nina along. With the security and speed of the reindeer she climbed the

rocks, and put back in silence the hand of her guide, which now supported and now extended itself to direct her. Suddenly she stood still. A boundless prospect opened itself: before her lay THE ETERNAL SNOW! Not a single mountain-peak covered with it now presented itself, or a valley filled with it, but a *sea of snow*, broken up at first by several grey splintered crags, and then extending far out, more and more regularly, more and more desolately, more and more immeasurable and terrific. It embraced the whole horizon,—it united itself to the dark cold heaven. Not a wind breathed; no bird nor insect moved its wings. One could say with Alfieri—"A certain unutterable silence reigned in that atmosphere, in which one fancied oneself rapt away from the earth." From the Sulitelma only, which rears not far off its rocky horns into the air, is heard a dull sound resembling thunder; for the icy pyramids of the glaciers tumble perpetually into the deep ice-chasms, which seem to be openings into the lower world.

Nina contemplated this awful picture of cold and death; these mountains perpetually about to crumble in ruins; this heaven without warmth; the deep silence in the air; the fearful vacuity all around—and this eternally so! She perceived deeply in her soul the fearful actuality of life—she felt that there was a something in the human heart which bore a resemblance to this picture, a coldness, a lifelessness, which yet breathed and perceived,—and that eternally so. She put aside her veil; she must breathe fresh air, she felt as if she should be suffocated. An infinite pang, an unspeakable woe, took hold upon her. It seemed to her as if she had here discovered the watchword of her life—eternal snow! She folded her hands in deep anguish, gazed fixedly on the snow-sea, and shed tears without rightly knowing why she did so. A still, hopeless misery was painted in her pale and lovely countenance.

"This," said she, half aloud to herself, "is the image of my life upon earth—cold, empty, dead; without joy, without love."

"Without love?" inquired a voice near her, whose beloved tones sank into her heart. She turned herself round. The unknown had thrown off his disguise, and Edward Hervey stood with beaming eyes and crimsoned cheeks before her.

Oh! was it indeed a wonder if he in the presence of eternal death perceived all the more forcibly the eternal life of his love,—and if he surrounded with it the beloved being that hostile powers threatened to attack? Was it to be wondered at, if he here told her that he loved her, that he would dedicate his whole life to her? Was it to be wondered at, that he poured forth like a torrent of light and life the infinite love which he felt for her?

The words which he spoke she returned. He clasped her to his heart. Their souls flowed into each other, and amid tears of bliss they exchanged words of frantic yet heavenly love. They repeated them a thousand and yet a thousand times, as if in very defiance of the coldness and death around them.

One of the oldest of the Mythes says, "That when it became light in chaos, the earth only and love arose therefrom." How charming!

Thus the fable had been realised. The earth was desolate and void, but the spirit of God floated over it,—and never had a more heavenly, a more blessed love united two beings, than now united Nina and Hervey. Let me here pause. Words are poor—the most charming music, the sweetest odour of flowers, light, colour,—all these things may give a foretaste of the most blissful love rather than words. Words blow the dust from the wings of the gods. Perhaps the novel-writer may some time have the power, if he choose his quill from the wing of an angel, to express in words that which yet he can only have a presentiment of—then he may make the attempt.

The moments of rapture, however, were but short for the lovers. Footsteps and voices which approached them led them back into reality, which for a few moments they had forgotten. The first guide followed on foot the pale and anxious Clara, who every now and then shouted the name of Nina. She was confounded at the sight of Hervey. The Countess was not less astonished, and was quite in ecstasies to see Hervey, who no longer concealed himself by his dress, but left it to every one to think what he pleased about his sudden appearance. Whilst he, with a presence of mind which the Baroness H. would have admired, endeavoured to make the affair either clear or confused to the Countess, Nina

continued her blessed dream, and hardly knew what went on around her. This recognition-scene, after the supernatural impression which the perpetual snow had made upon the greater number, caused a most highly agreeable diversion of mind. Yet it was not long before all eyes turned themselves once more to the silvery sea.

Looking on this, Lord Cummin only uttered again his laconic "Oh!" Lady Louisa found the prospect "frightful." To the Frenchman appeared "*Le paysage un peu monotone!*" The German was pale with cold and *erhabene Gedanken*.

The sun had sunk behind the Fjällen. The spectacle became paler and paler, and so also the impression on the soul of the spectator. With Edward and Nina this was not the case. What was death to them? Shone not flames of life and of love bright and heavenly in their hearts? They throw a glorifying splendour upon the outer world.

The rest of the company began to get a little cold, and the thought that it would be most extremely pleasant to turn some of the perpetual snow into boiling tea-water suggested itself to many of them. When the Frenchman gave word to this thought, it was received with general acclamation, but most especially from Lord Cummin; they all betook themselves to the place in which it was determined to pass the night. It lay in the midst of crags; on three sides it was defended from the cold mountain-wind, the fourth afforded a free prospect over the country. Here and there grew green mountain-herbs and reindeer moss; from the peaks of the crags sounded the joyful twittering of the snow-finches.

The Countess invited the company to supper in her tent, and the cold proved itself an excellent incentive to appetite, as well as to joke and laughter. Hervey soon left the merry circle. His joy, as well as Nina's, was at this moment joy of another kind. His heart was full—he required solitude. He went out, and as he surveyed the free space around him, and felt how the night wind fanned his cheek, his mind was soon better for it.

Singular was the picture which lay spread out before him at this moment. Like a sea in commotion that has suddenly become stiffened, the rocks extended themselves on all sides;

their white, irregular, gigantic masses stretched forth towards heaven, which looked down upon them with a dark-blue tranquil eye. No life moved in the immeasurable space. The wind went forth with fettered pinions, and now and then lighted on the peak of a snow-mountain.

It was this image of eternal repose, of immovable lifelessness, which, in the youthful days of the earth, drew so irresistibly the sons of the south towards the north. In the south, the sun burnt hotly; the earth trembled under the feet of its inhabitants; fire raged in the mountains, and wild passions in the souls of men: up there, among the hyperboreans, the stars themselves stood still; there the earth was cool, the wood deep and still. In the north, a wonderful brightness illumined the nights, which seemed to testify of the presence of God and of a light which never descends. And an infinite longing took hold on the afflicted people; they left their burning home and wandered towards the north, in order to seek for a peace there which on earth was—not to be found.

Edward had seen the perpetual snow upon the Himalaya mountains; he had seen under the equator all the strength of the earth drawn upwards by the sun; he had seen in the desert how the same power burned up all life; he recalled the changing scenes of the earth; he thought how even the heavenly bodies had a perpetually changing place with regard to the sun; and he wondered how, in this universal change upon the changing earth, a life should yet spring up which feared not alteration and change—a life in which two happy beings became united, and spoke the blessed word—FOR EVER!

Edward's heart beat warmly with this thought. Happy, and filled with the spirit of worship, he stood upon the eternal snow before the eternal Creator.

The peaks of the snow-mountains grew greyer and greyer; the stars stepped forth more and more brightly from their mysterious depth; the wind laid itself; it became ever stiller and darker.

East of Elivåg cometh
The frost-cold giant's
Sleep-thorn so mighty,
With which, in the deepest
Midnight profound,
All souls he striketh.

Then action ceaseth ;
 Down sink the hands ;
 Falleth a slumber
 On the white snow-god ;
 Dream-wildness endeth
 The joys of the giantess,
 The ponderings of might
 And of busy revenge.

Thus sings the Edda of sleep when night cometh down on the earth.

Suddenly, however, a secret power seemed to retard the progress of the night. Midnight was not far off, and the country became lighter rather than darker. A wonderful brightness diffused itself over the heavens, and mirrored itself in the snow of the rocks. It seemed as if the voices and glances of the lovers had awoken the slumbering genius of this country, and as if this now returned an echo to that short drama of love—the first, perhaps, which had been represented in his kingdom. Pale flames began to dance in changing shapes on the horizon. Now they flew forth, clear as glances of light from human eyes ; now they were unfolded like leaves written in rainbow colours. The rays shot upwards ever towards the mid-heaven ; they became brighter and brighter, stronger and stronger, and extended themselves more and more ; at last, they ascended from all sides, and the aurora borealis embraced heaven and earth with its majestic glory.

Hervey found himself at this moment surrounded by the whole of his travelling companions, who had been enticed from the tent by the wonderful brightness of the night, and who now collected around him with exclamations of the highest astonishment. Hervey cast a glance on Nina ; it passed into her soul, warm and clear as a flame from heaven. They stood now side by side, and the fairies of light wove above them a crown of glory and splendour.

The German sank upon his knees on the perpetual snow, and rejoiced beforehand in the thought how beautifully the description of the Northern lights would tell in his "Journey through Sweden and Norway." The Countess turned to Hervey, to inquire from him the cause of this natural appearance ; and by this means tore him from the silent ecstasy to which he had given himself up by the side of Nina. All that which Hervey told the Countess about electrical and magnetical currents of air, we will not venture upon repeating ;

and that truly out of regard to the learned men, who might not have great forbearance with the errors of our weak memory. Lady Cummin wrote Hervey's words down in her Journal.

By the light of the dancing and by degrees again extinguished flames the company returned to the tent. The Countess, who appeared to have remarked something, watched Nina with Argus eyes. She did this also on the next day; so that however much Hervey desired it from his heart, he had no opportunity of speaking alone with Nina. But he was near her; he surrounded her with those tender assiduities which, when persons love each other, are so cheerfully rendered and so cheerfully accepted; in the mean time a sort of fear consumed him, and a certain disquiet was observed in his whole demeanour. He promoted the journey with a hasty impatience, which had not been seen in him before.

The day after the northern lights, the company fixed their night encampment in a valley at the foot of the Garda Fjällen. Here Nina, hovering as it were between anguish and happiness, found opportunity to separate herself for a short time from the rest of the company, and to seek for solitude. She went deeper into the valley, in which a rich vegetation displayed itself. Round about her reared the gigantic pyramids, cones, and jagged points of the Garda Fjällen. Their snow-covered peaks flamed in the rays of the evening sun, and stood around the dark valley like burning giant torches. Thousands of flowers adorned the earth with their splendid colouring, and the song of the beechfinches resounded from the bushes. Here Nina delayed her footsteps, for here it was beautiful. She seated herself on a mossy fragment of rock, the tranquillity around her diffused also a tranquillity in her soul. Here Hervey found her; here, seated at her feet, he said with all the earnestness and fervour of his loving heart:

"Words have passed between us which can only be succeeded by others. Thine for ever—for ever mine!" and so saying, he held her hands in his, and looked at her with the strong glance of undying love which has the power of appropriating to itself the soul of another.

"Yes, thine or death's," replied Nina without effort, calmly, but with the deepest conviction.

After this he besought her to relate to him all which was

connected with himself. He wished to know what were the impediments against which he should have to combat; there could be no further impediments. He would overcome with ease everything which opposed itself to the fulfilment of their wishes. The fetters which held his own life bound should be released. She loved him, and that gave him courage for everything.

Frankly and simply Nina made him acquainted with her position. Her lips pronounced the name of Count Ludwig, and a deathly paleness spread itself over Hervey's countenance.

"He too—he!" stammered Hervey, and pressed his hand on his brow.

"Yes, he!—ah, why are you so pale?"

"He was my friend—I was his. Certain circumstances separated us for ever. Yet neither he nor I was to blame. Gladly would I have spared him this new wound from my hand. But it must be," added he with determination; "from this time forth you cannot belong to him. Nina is mine—she can only belong to me—to me for ever!"

Nina's hand rested in his, and her look seemed to set the seal to his words. She then continued her relation. Her tongue trembled, but she concealed nothing, not even when she came to speak of Don Juan; she was as little able to lock up the interior of her heart from him as from God. She related how Count Ludwig had behaved on this occasion. Hervey listened to her words with breathless uneasiness; but when she came to the deferring of her betrothal with Count Ludwig and of his journey, with the verbal promise of a future engagement, he breathed again freely, and covered her hands with kisses and tears of joy.

"Thus not bride," said he, "not bound. Thank God! How easy, how dear to me will be the contest for you! But listen to me, Nina! listen to me, adored angel! still, bands fetter me which your hand can only release. Tell me, Nina, if a stain rested upon my name—if the suspicion of a horrible crime fell upon me—if circumstances prevented me from proving my innocence—if I were pursued by the persecution of my fellow-creatures; tell me, Nina, would you then also, even love me—could you then also still consent to unite your fate to mine?"

Hervey's countenance was pale as death, but his eyes beamed.

"I love you!" answered Nina. Her whole soul, her faith, her hope, her future, her heaven, lay in these words.

"And if," continued he, "in order to defend myself against that which I do not merit—if I, in order not to defy public opinion, which is not able to justify me, must ever remain hidden in this corner of the world, where nature is severe and pleasures only are few—would you then live with me here?"

"I love you!" was Nina's answer.

"And if hatred sought me out," added he, "and I should be compelled to find a place of safety in foreign lands—would you follow me?"

"I love you!" replied Nina. "O Edward, where your home is there is mine also: by your side I fear nothing!"

Heartfelt happiness of perfect love, thou breakest down all impediments, all rocks, all doubts! For thee may it be said, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

The feeling of being able to defy the world filled Hervey's soul with god-like joy. An indescribable feeling of joy, gratitude, emotion, and burning love, took possession of his whole being. He looked on Nina with adoring, blissful, love-intoxicated eyes. "Thou my own!" said he, with a voice as heartfelt and strong as his love. He would have clasped her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart, but Nina gently put him back, joined her hands beseechingly together, and said with infinite affection, with that mild, holy dignity, peculiar to the angels of heaven:

"And now—hear my prayer! You know my love; you know my weakness. Be my good angel, Edward! Demand no promise from me; bind me not; let me be free till Edla comes. No cloud on your brow, beloved! You have truly bound my heart for ever! But hear my prayer—speak to me no more of your love till Edla returns! She alone can release me from the word which binds me to another—she alone shall dispose of my hand—she alone has the right to decide for me. To act in opposition to Edla would burden my whole life with repentance and ingratitude. Edward, beloved Edward, turn not from me—look at me—listen to

me! I will be yours or—die! But Edla must decide for me between life or death. She gave me life, Edward—she gave me more—she formed the soul with which I love you. It must be so; O Edward, tell me that you acknowledge it also! Beloved, defend me against my own weakness. You know that against your will mine has no strength. Ah, Edward—understand your power—you must be strong for us both! But do not leave me—that I could not bear. Be my support in this time of expectation, of uncertainty. Ah, remain near me, remain with me, as before——”

“Nina, Nina—you know not what you ask,” exclaimed Hervey, with the most violent emotion, as pressing his hand upon his brow he turned from her.

“Oh, I know it!” said she, filled with heavenly confidence and superhuman love. “Are you not an angel? Have I not loved you because you take a high stand in life, and resolutely maintain that right and good alone rules? See, beloved—I lay the peace of my life, my conscience, my all, in your hands. O preserve me free from remorse, from shame before Edla, before my own conscience, and ah—before your eyes; for you, excellent one! could not love me if you must disapprove of my conduct. Let this hour have heard our last words of love, till the moment in which Edla shall have blessed us. Oh then, then, and through the whole of my life will I thank you. Thou beloved, thou eternally beloved, fulfil my prayer!”

And with these words, with upraised and extended hands, and weeping eyes, she lay at Hervey's feet. Overcome by the sight he sprang forward, “Lovely child!” said he with fervent lips—but these words were the last token of passion in his soul. He slowly passed his hand over his eyes, as if he would rid himself of a misleading thought—and pale, but again assured, he raised Nina as he said in a broken voice:

“Be calm, Nina; your wish, your prayer, shall be sacred to me. You shall not see the pang which they prepare for me!”

He bent himself deeply—he kissed the hem of her garment—at the same moment soft footsteps approached; it was Clara, who said in a trembling voice, “They wait supper for you.”

With this, all three returned silently and full of thought to the company.

A great change had taken place in Hervey. Since he had spoken with Nina, since he had seen her love for him, he was capable of everything, except only renouncing her. His strong mind had taken the firm determination to obtain her spite of all hindrances. Calmly sunk in himself, and with fervent countenance, he revolved plans for the future. The hope of publicly being justified and acquitted had now taken root in his soul. A letter from Philip gave occasion to this; they thought they had found traces of the guilty one. Was this hope fulfilled, Hervey might openly seek to obtain Nina's hand. The time when people might have declared such a union a *mésalliance* was past. Were his hope unsuccessful, it remained yet for him to win Edla to his side, and then he would resign his office, and with Nina and his family once more—it might be only for a time—seek out another country. Edward had learned, in combat with the world, how much a firm will can do. As he had said before, so said he now with determination—"The world is large—I will find an asylum for me and mine,—and God is above us!"

The Countess cast a sharp glance on them; they however were too much occupied by their own thoughts to notice it. The company ate strawberries and milk—but what do our friends care, what do we ourselves care at this time about that?

CHAPTER XXXV.

PICTURES FROM THE LIFE OF THE HEART.

There once was a sick person whose sole disease was, to possess no joy. * * *
A great joy would restore her health.—AZOURAS.

I learned to love, and, at that time,
Through love I learned what life is.—ATTERBOM.

WHY was Clara so pale? Whence came the melancholy in her gentle eyes? Nina felt the necessity of inquiring after this. She wished, by fully communicating that which had reference to herself, to thank Clara for her tender sympathy, and by this means to open a path to her heart.

Besides this, Nina's breast was at the present time so full, that she longed for a friend, for a sister, to whom she could impart her feelings, from whom she could obtain counsel, and on whose faithful breast she could find calm for the present and help in the future struggle.

On the day of their return to Umenäs, in the evening after the company had retired, she sought out Clara. The Baroness had taken upon herself, in a grave conversation with the Countess, to warn her of her coquetteries with the Colonel. Clara was alone in her chamber as Nina softly entered.

Clara sate upon her bed with her head thoughtfully supported by her hand. Nina seated herself beside her, kissed her cheek, and softly whispered her name. The cheek was wet with tears, and tears stood in the eyes which Clara mildly raised to her friend.

"Clara," exclaimed Nina, distressed, "you are not happy—you are suffering!"

"What does it signify if a person do suffer?" returned Clara calmly, as she carefully drew together the neckerchief which she had just thrown loose.

"Clara," said Nina, "tell me what is amiss with you. Can I help you, can I comfort you?"

"Believe me," returned Clara, as she dried her tears—"believe me, suffering is not so bad; one is better from it. One suffers, it is true; but one loves only all the more for it. One learns from it to forget oneself.—It is altogether my own fault," continued she, after a short pause. "Can one help loving the excellent, the godlike? If the heart becomes so warmly interested, if it beat so violently that it gives us pain, it does no harm; on the contrary, it is very beneficial."

A painful light spread itself over Nina's soul. She covered her face with both her hands. "Clara," whispered she, "O how much better are you than I!"

"Do not say so," besought Clara, "that is not the case; for you can make him happy—I cannot. I never have had the audacity to believe—I know my own little worth only too well. I have only wished to be able to serve him—you—you both! But do not let us speak further of me. Let us speak of you, of him; for I know that now you two have only one common interest."

The conversation of the two young friends was here suddenly interrupted. The Baroness H. entered, and her displeased mien, her hasty movements, plainly betrayed that, with regard to the Countess, her trouble had been unsuccessful. Nina remained yet a moment: but the Baroness was cool towards her, and the conversation soon became so

heavy, that Nina, though against her will, and with a depressed mind, felt it necessary to withdraw. Clara on this walked to the window in order to conceal her excited state of mind. The Baroness followed her, but with noiseless steps, took hold of her by the chin and turned her face towards her, and observing her with a sympathising and penetrating glance inquired:

“Clara, what is amiss with you? You have never been like yourself since the perpetual snow—and you hide yourself from me! That is not right—that is not good of you, Clara.”

Clara could not resist the look and the tone; she opened her whole heart to her friend.

The beautiful night saw the most beautiful and the most devoted soul combat against the weakness of physical strength,—saw a resigned heart shaken by convulsions,—saw the most beautiful and most tender endeavours of friendship,—saw how the good spirits in the end were victorious.

The next day Baron H. and his wife were prepared for their journey. They explained that important business demanded their presence in Paradise, and in the course of the forenoon they, together with Clara, set off thither. Just before they set off the Baroness sate down to write a letter to Hervey; after the first lines, however, she stopped, saying, “Shall I teach that man the ten commandments? If I do not err, he knows them better than I do.” She tore the letter in two. She reflected a moment, and then began a note to the Countess, but she interrupted herself with the word “admiring!—I have no desire to begin such a part so late!” she tore the note in two. Next she began an epistle to Nina. Here again she interrupted herself, and tore in two that which she had written.

“Clara,” said she, addressing her, “I have to-day the desire to quarrel with everybody, but that leads to no purpose, and I will therefore rather let it alone. Do you write to Nina that which your own angel-heart dictates, and then let us quickly hence—that is the very best.”

She kissed Clara, and left the room.

Clara, who after the agitations of the night felt herself too weak for a verbal communication with Nina, wrote to her the following words:

“I would serve him—serve you; that is my most inward

wish. You are created for each other; you will make each other infinitely happy. If I can do anything to be useful to you, O say so, say so! Write to me, good Nina; relate to me everything about yourself, about him; tell me of your love to him—tell me very much on that subject. Impart to me your plans for the future. Miss Edla—Count Ludwig—shall I come to you when you expect them back? Say only one word.

“Do not be uneasy on my account, beloved Nina. I am calm. I have a friend who is God’s best gift to me, his feeble child. O how good is he not! I shall first be perfectly happy when I am perfectly easy respecting your future fate. Do not speak of me if you write to me; grant me this prayer! I have now more than ever reason to forget myself. Ah, that is so beneficial! But speak of yourself, of your life—of everything which concerns *him* and you. In my thoughts I separate you no longer. I pray for you both :

May a quiet blessedness
With its pinions cover you!”

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NINA TO CLARA.

“HAVE you had a sister, Clara? A sister like you in age, to whom from your birth you imparted everything—the mother’s breast—the cradle—sport—caresses—instructions; and was she early torn from you? and was your heart and life encompassed by a horrible desert? Oh then you know the bliss and the pain also of my childhood!

“I cannot conceive a more beautiful existence than that of twin-sisters who go hand in hand through life; whose enjoyments are mutual—who participate in each other’s feelings and thoughts—who weep over the same sorrow—who rejoice over the same festivity, whether it be only a midsummer merriment or the Holy Supper. They stand in life like two young trees beside each other, and each new spring twines the twigs of their crown closer together. The happy ones! How intimately known is each to the other! How well must they understand each other, and be mutually able to read in each other’s eyes as in a clear mirror. Can life ever

become to either of them empty and dark? And if the one suffer, then has the other indeed the key to her heart; she knows every fold therein, and can open the locked-up chamber to the beams of the daylight.

"I too had a sister—a twin-sister—a little amiable friend. Life and play we partook of with each other. We had only one heart—one will—one thought. For seven years were we happy together—then she drooped and died. Her death was my first sorrow; yet it did not operate upon me like sorrow. It was a benumbing blow. It was to me as if I had lost the half of my life. I longed for her, and wasted away. At length I followed her—yes, I died—I died according to my own feeling—I died as it appeared to others. What or who withheld me from the mysterious bounds, and commanded me to return and to finish my work, I know not; O my God, thou alone knowest it! I appeared dead; they laid me in my coffin. Warm weather was at hand, and I was placed in a cool dark chamber.

"Hear now, Clara, that which even now I cannot relate without a shudder.

"I lay in my coffin, and all was dark, vacant, and still; I slept deeply, deeply as the dead sleep. All at once I felt an iciness, a pang—it was life! My eyelids were heavy; with difficulty I raised them, and saw only night. I had always been fearful, and now also I was frightened at the darkness which brought me only the quicker to consciousness. I felt with my little hands about me, and took hold of the silver handles of the coffin. I had seen the same on the coffin of my little sister. I listened, all was still; I believed myself to be in the grave. I had not strength either to call or to speak. I heard the rats gnawing on my coffin—something crept over my face—I took it for the worms which were come to prey upon me. Small and feeble as I was, still I experienced in that moment a horror and a pang which neither time nor circumstances will ever be able to efface from my memory. I believed that I should thus have to continue living on in the grave, in darkness and in cold; but I did not endure this agony long, for my consciousness again left me.

"O Clara! listen now to an occurrence which I cannot think upon without joy and pain.

"I saw a light; it became stronger and stronger. I heard

a movement—it approached nearer and nearer; I felt a warmth—it was more and more agreeable; it set my heart in motion. Hot tears fell on my face; ah, they called me back to life. I awoke; I opened my eyes—they fell upon Edla, who wept over me. I lay upon her bosom, and she gave me warmth and life.

“The next day had been fixed upon for my burial. In the night Edla had gone to her little departed sister to pay her yet one more farewell visit; she took me out of my coffin, and carried me into her chamber, which I no more left.

“After this occurrence I had knowledge of but very little more. It has been told me that I lay for three years in a feeble only half-conscious state upon my bed, vegetating rather than living. I had seen the coffin of my little sister, and had heard my weeping father say, ‘the Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ I myself had experienced the horror of death. That sight, this impression, and these words, floated perpetually before my soul. In vain endeavoured they to infuse into me more joyous thoughts; in vain they tried by a little play-fellow to replace my Mina; I could not endure the least noise, nor the least disquiet around me. The little stranger was a burden to me, and was obliged to be sent away. A frost of death had come over my life, and I remember only a few impressions from that time of stupefaction. I seemed to myself as a shadow, as a dream; I could not comprehend myself as anything actual; it was almost the same with regard to the objects around me. All was so misty; so indistinct; so dark; so lifeless! It seemed to me as if all things flowed slowly down a passing stream—as if I lay in my coffin and floated away also—away to a boundless sea in which all things were lost. Those words, ‘the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away,’ had to me a dark and gloomy meaning, and I very soon came to look upon the Creator as an unfathomable deep, out of which all things proceeded, and to which they all again returned—but not in the sense of the Christian doctrine. There hovered over the cradle of my childhood, as well as over that of the human race, the image of a blind power, producing all and devouring all.

“ But Edla sat by my sick-bed. I heard daily her gentle assured voice, saw her tranquil look, her quiet demeanour, her all-arranging activity ; I enjoyed her care—her strengthening presence, and by degrees I experienced the benefits of them. My thoughts fortified themselves through hers, I began as it were to live through her : a drop of her strength flowed softly through my veins ; I awoke, I raised myself, both body and soul. Formerly I had been a self-willed child ; Edla taught me to obey, and before long I refused no toys nor nourishment which I received from her hands. Edla was never severe either in word or deed, and yet still she exercised an extraordinary power over me. It never occurred to me that any one could do other than obey her. The first manifestations of my newly-awakened life were those of extreme excitability of feeling. The most trifling excitement of mind, the least joy or the least pain, drew from me torrents of tears ; nay, they often flowed without any apparent occasion. I think my life might have gushed away in tears ; every time however that I wept, Edla left me alone in the chamber. No calling—no entreaties could keep her back, and this chastising absence I could not endure. In order to keep Edla with me, I repressed my tears and the convulsive agitations which these outbreaks of feeling occasioned.

“ That weakness, that warmth of my heart exhibited itself in the great necessity which I felt for caresses. I put my mouth to Edla’s lips—I could have kissed her hand by the whole hour, but she would not allow it—she never kissed me. Ah ! why did she not ? It was so bitter to my young heart to see its affection repulsed, I cannot describe how Edla operated upon me. She was law to me ; she was my faith, my providence, my all. I lived only through her—I wished only to live for her. Oh, that Edla had consented to this—had but permitted me to love her—had but needed my tenderness then, how happy should I have been ! Edla was a mother to me, and yet I know not if she loved me ; nay, I doubt whether she did. Amiable human weaknesses are not for Edla. Man is little to her, she loves only virtue—only immortality ; her great soul encompasses the world ; she embraces humanity.

“ With awakened strength and the necessity for affection in my heart, I lay on my bed ; Edla presented me with

nourishment of another kind, and after it I eagerly grasped. I was conscious of want, and desired plenty. Edla was my teacher, she gave me knowledge; I eagerly drew in her words, and followed her beckonings. So, for years I lived at her side. 'Let me learn, let me learn!' was my only prayer,—my best reward was Edla's satisfaction. This occupation, intercourse with Edla, her conversation, exercise in the open air, all this strengthened, by degrees, both body and soul. I had no delight in that which I learned; it always seemed to me as if I did not understand the meaning of words or things, and I never felt that fresh satisfaction which is so peculiar to youth. At times a strange feeling, like lightning, passed through me—it was a trembling presentiment of life and joy, a presentiment that some time I might enjoy the world, and might taste the happiness of all created beings. But that was only momentarily, and then again all was misty and dark. It was not unusual often for me to contemplate my hand, my foot, or my own face in the glass, and inquire if these things really belonged to myself? Ah! I understood my own heart still less. Often have I laid my hand upon my breast full of astonishment at that which below moved itself so unquietly. At times an inexpressible melancholy took hold of me, and with it a longing after my little sister, which it was impossible for me to describe in words. Willingly would I have gone to her, only not through death. My extraordinary acquaintance with this pale angel had inspired me with a fear of the grave which I still feel; yet I now know how one can escape it. This melancholy was an anxious foreboding of my advancing life, accompanied by a weariness and an indifference which extended itself to everything around me.

"My state of mind disturbed Edla, and she listened, although unwillingly, to that which I told of my anxious presentiments, and my secret griefs; she seemed to despise them as the offspring of a feeble spirit, and of a sickly imagination. This gave me strength to repress them—that is to say, to conceal them; for I have never been free from them,—and even now, Clara, when so much is changed in me, and a new life has sprung up in my soul, yet still these feelings, these forebodings, return at times powerfully even to this hour. At such times it seems to me as if I lived here only a counterfeit life, and a secret voice says to me that I shall

never be happy, and also that I shall never become old on earth. However, these forebodings now pass more quickly over. Hervey's clear glance chases away all these dark thoughts.

"Religious instruction operated beneficially upon me; it enlightened my soul, and gave to me a being that I could love—God. O Clara, am I worthy to say so? Can I love, comprehend the All-wise? I cannot. My feeling was a sigh breathed upwards to Him and nothing more; yet that, too, was good. I looked through Edla up to Him. I learned in Edla to admire virtue, and to abhor crimes and weaknesses; all only through her. Count Ludwig made no good impressions upon me; he made virtue appear stern, and in him I almost learned to fear it. In Edla I had learned to reverence and admire it; Hervey alone has taught me to love it. I admire Edla,—who would not, if he had seen her quiet, uninterrupted activity; her self-denial; the beneficence which she practises in stillness, and had seen at the same time the care with which she concealed everything which would have drawn upon her the praise of her fellow-men? Edla's soul is a severe temple.

"I was nineteen when my father married the Countess Natalie. Our quiet home, in which I had so long seen Edla the influencing spirit, was changed as if by a magic stroke.

"A certain weakness, which was the result of my delicate health, had hitherto made it impossible for me to endure social life. The murmur of voices of so many people, the bright lights, the passing backwards and forwards of a crowd, occasioned me a painful feeling, and often the most violent headache. I was most comfortable when alone with Edla.

"By degrees this weakness decreased more and more, and I was, at the time of my father's second marriage, tolerably free from it. Ah! on this there followed, not only outward changes, but inward also, which were deeply painful to me. I was no longer permitted to be much with Edla, and I fancied that Edla had become indifferent towards me. She never expressed the wish that it should be otherwise, but gave herself up with zeal to serious occupations, which I knew were dear to her. Perhaps Edla was not dissatisfied with my removal; she obtained by this means more time for

herself. Ah! I know not; but she seemed to forget me in her occupations. It grieved me, but I did not dare to complain. Yet at the same time I will not deny that my new mode of life pleased me; and I endeavoured in it to forget Edla's coldness and withdrawal from me. Some time after the marriage of my father, Edla left us. Why did she? Why did she leave one so young and so inexperienced alone in a world full of temptations? Perhaps Edla wished to try me. Ah! she considered me stronger than I was. With her my strength had vanished. I was left solely under the guidance of my stepmother. You know, Clara—for you yourself have experienced it—what a charm can lie in her behaviour, in her care and her tenderness. She showed me the greatest attention; and not she alone, but everybody who surrounded her overwhelmed me with a sort of worship. It did me good to see myself beloved, to hear myself praised; I was, as it were, intoxicated with this new delight. My days were consecrated to vain enjoyments and idle pleasures.

“In the house of my stepmother there ruled pomp and elegance. Her social circle consisted of artists and lovers of the arts; of the most brilliant and most agreeable which the capital possessed. Beauty, wit, and intelligence, found there their point of union. I saw myself as the centre of this enchanting circle; I was the object of all eyes, of all flatteries. I let myself go with the stream, and be amused. I cannot say that life appeared to me more intelligible than before; yet my dream, on the contrary, was agreeable in the extreme. I gave myself up to the life of indolence which my mother, out of tenderness to me, prepared for me. I read many of the newer novels. They enchanted me, and yet they called forth in me disturbing and wild fancies. The people who surrounded me helped only the more to mislead me. When I reflected on them, I saw that the definite characteristics of virtue and vice existed in them no longer; all appeared to me mixed up together. If I had seen a Satan, and I had been tempted by him, I should have said—‘Depart from me!’ But I saw myself surrounded only by good, amiable, agreeable people: truly, all of them chargeable with errors; nay, many among them I knew to be persons of most libertine lives; but then they acknowledged their failings themselves, and these did not prevent their being good; did not prevent their enjoy-

ment of that which was beautiful, nor their being occupied in works of the highest order, nor their being amiable and beloved. They endured also the failings of others without blame; no one had therefore a right to be severe against them. There reigned especially in this circle an agreeable and, according to appearance, an innocent gaiety—a lenient judgment of men and their failings. The boundaries between the good and the bad became to me ever more and more uncertain.

“Edla had shown to me the good and the bad, in expressive, intelligible forms; she had taught me to know the two poles of life. The indistinct, less visible gradations she had not been able to show me; the knowledge of these is obtained only by intercourse with mankind and life itself. I had hitherto, as it were, only learned to distinguish night and day, not twilight; now I had a picture in more intermediate shades before me, and in its indistinct play of shadow and light I lost my way.

“And what principles heard I not daily expressed. They were those of a generally allowed laxity and scepticism. I heard everything made a matter of question, which hitherto I had considered as sacred and firmly established; and wit and jest thereon flew hither and thither. There was no decided spirit of disbelief; no, it was more a jesting confession, a sighing doubt, a light irony, often also a fleeting homage, and then every one lived again to the enjoyment of the moment, to pleasure or to self-love. They cherished in this circle a great horror of those whom they called fanatics; that is to say, people who erected a standard of ideal excellence, up to which it was impossible to live. I heard Edla frequently instanced as one of these enthusiastic souls, who lived in the world of fancy, and for whom actual things had no value.

“The actual world, what is it properly? So questioned I with myself. Could the actual be no other than this strange mixture of weakness and goodness, of virtues and failings, of pleasures and care, of all opinions, all possibilities, all aberrations, which I saw around me? Was there nothing determinate in life? Was everything only comparatively, conditionally good? They told me so. They repeated to me, to very weariness, that every time had its good and its bad;

so also had every individual. This depends on nature and chance; God condemns no one on that account; there is no hell, etc. etc. Mere words and ideas, as half-formed and dim as my soul.

“These views and these people made upon me a strange perplexing impression; yet I did not comprehend it as clearly at that time as now. I could not make it intelligible to myself; and the inborn bias in me to indolence made me shrink from any strain upon my thoughts. I turned my mind from the difficult question, and gave myself more and more up to the life which surrounded me. A certain desire after life’s enjoyment, and for that purpose that I might in some way feel myself a real creature, took possession of my soul more and more. I was as it were upon the Island of Calypso; and still more and more under the power of enchantment, became weaker and weaker, I myself knew not how. Edla wrote often to me, and always tenderly, prudently, and admonishingly. But a fascination had come over me, and even her words failed of their customary influence.

“How was it, Clara, that at this time I did not ally myself with you? I recollect yet so well the gentle impressions of your quiet being, like that of a saint; and how you sate so tranquil, so self-sustained, and so indifferent to the life which surrounded you. But at that time there were so many things to sunder us, and I did not deserve your friendship.

“I saw Count Ludwig daily. I knew that he desired a union with me; I knew that this union was Edla’s highest wish. Ah, for her sake, I would have loved him! But to be near him occasioned me constraint and a strange coldness of heart. A bitter contempt of people, nay even of their virtues, often betrayed itself in his words. People universally showed him distinguished esteem; yet he seemed not to be beloved. I saw many bow themselves deeply before him; never did I see any one ever frankly and cordially offer him the hand. He appeared to me high and cold as an alp covered with snow. I froze when I came near him. I knew much that was good of him; I knew the sincere friendship which Edla cherished for him, and for that reason I reproached myself with the feelings which, against my will, forced themselves upon me.

“I come now to a time, Clara, on which I cannot think

without pain and shame. We will spare us both by only slightly mentioning it. You know it mostly already. You know the kind of power which an unworthy person obtained over my weak soul,—but you do not know how nearly my guilty indiscretion brought me to humiliation. I did not love him, my wishes were pure; and yet I permitted him to fascinate my soul and mind with his music and his impure love.

“ I have bitterly deplored this part of my life, in which I was so unworthy of Hervey and Edla.

“ Edla returned. Terrible, blessed hour! Terrible, because I was deeply sunk; blessed, because it saved me! But O how I felt at first, when I saw that pure lofty-minded Edla despise me!—when I saw her weeping over me, and I could not lift up my eyes to her and say, ‘I am innocent.’ No, that I could not. But humble myself, confess and repent—that I could do, and that I did. It was my salvation that I was capable of despising my own weakness, and of acknowledging the pure and the good, from which I had fallen. With Edla my better self returned; with her my purer love, my admiration of excellence, which she had taught me to know. She seemed to me to be better and purer than ever. Virtue had surrounded her quiet being with a glory. Ah! this diffused over me, the fallen one, its pure brightness, and I longed after Edla’s clear heaven. I felt the deep necessity to let myself be guided by her, and to subject myself in all things to her will, to her determination. Edla’s power over me was more unlimited than ever. Had she remained with me, had I been able to live near her and under her influence, then perhaps had my soul met with no new agitation; she would have tranquillised it under her defence, and I should have had peace, if not happiness. But a higher power had otherwise determined it. You know the noble behaviour of Count Ludwig on the occurrence at Ramlösa, and how he demanded my hand at the moment when my reputation—and with justice—had somewhat suffered. You know also that which followed on his doing so: my consent, my father’s illness, and the delay of my betrothal. Edla made a journey, and once more my life was a prey to its former want; nevertheless, because it was Edla’s wish, and from a feeling of duty and a desire thereby to regain my lost self-esteem, I

conducted myself friendly towards Count Ludwig, and felt patient with my fate. He, however, also left me. I was happy that he did so. Ah! I felt that I never could love him. And this feeling made me wretched.

“I accompanied my mother into this country, where she had resolved to spend a year. I was glad of it; I wished to endeavour to collect myself in solitude, and if possible to obtain more clearness and repose of mind.

“Clearness and repose of mind I did not obtain. A deep disquiet reigned in my breast. With Edla I had lost my strength. The elasticity which she had called forth in my soul again slept. I tried to recal formerly beloved images, but the mirror of my soul was dark, it reflected nothing with distinctness. Oh, it is difficult again to purify when it has once become stained! I was weary of myself; I seemed to myself so devoid of any peculiar worth. I had lost the interest in my own life. If I had died on the morrow, who would have lost by it? I was so insignificant, and felt myself without a future. There lay, as it were, a veil upon me and upon the world.

“The gloom of the season and of nature round about me increased yet more this tone of mind. The dark, endless pine-woods, the rocks, the roaring of the sea, the north wind that whistled over it, the short days, the darkness, the cold,—all occasioned me anxiety under which my health suffered. Edla loved the powerful and the great in life and in nature. I had often seen her eye beam with joy at a wide prospect, at a view of the sea, or of the starry heavens. She loved even wild scenes of nature, storms, thunder, for they gave wings to her fancy. How different, on the contrary, was my feeling! Everything great, strong, and infinite caused me a kind of pain. The sea, with its restless waves which lost themselves in infinity, resembled to me an abyss; neither eye nor feeling found repose. I longed for a coast—the little boat of my life was formed to follow its agreeable windings. I loved only the mild, warm sunshine, for only in it was I able to live.

“On a cold November day I went with my mother to church. The earth and the trees were covered with hoar frost, and a thick mist lay over the whole country. The carriage rattled along; and trees, mountains, and cottages,

flew like shadows before me. That feeling which dwelt in the depths of my soul took hold of me stronger than ever at this moment.

“How all things travel onward, thought I—how all rush past like a stream! Days, the year, events, things; all feelings, all thoughts, flee over, swift and traceless as mist. Life is the great dream which sustains the whole; and all men, high and low, good and bad, move themselves in it,—they rise, they fall, with swinging waves; they were formed but of mist, and are again lost in it. Who knows himself—who knows others? We go past one another—past, ah, it is so cold! Who can build upon his own heart—who upon that of another, or upon life? Who can say to the future, ‘that shall be?’ We see everything only through thick mist—we stumble about only in thick mist.

“An infinite and inexpressible indifference towards life had taken hold of me. The words, to-morrow, joy, life, friendship, God, existed no more for me. All wishes, all feelings, appeared extinguished in my soul, and it was to me as if I should swim in mist and lose myself in infinite space. A strong faintness came over me; I laid my head in the corner of the carriage—all swam before my eyes; all objects around me lost themselves in the depth. My thoughts went from me; but a deep repose came over my soul, and my tongue attempted to pronounce the words, ‘the Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’

“The attentions of my mother recalled me to consciousness. I had been in a fainting fit. The air, sharp and cold, which entered through the open carriage-window, brought me back to myself. Full of anxiety about my state, my mother would have turned back in order to take me home; I wished her not to do so, we were just by the church. In a half stupified state of mind I alighted from the carriage, and we took our places in the house of God. Our seat was a few steps from the pulpit, just opposite to the altar. The altar-piece represented the Resurrection; angels heaved the stone from the grave out of which the Saviour, beaming with light, ascended; the rosy tint of morning tinged the horizon and fell upon Golgotha: I looked at the beautiful picture without understanding it. My thoughts were dead; the sun

which had broken through the mist shone in now through the church window, and lit up the picture as if it would say, 'behold!' There fell also a ray upon me, but I felt it not. They sang the hymn—I sang too unconsciously. When, however, the confession of sins was read, a deep feeling of my own weakness, of my nothingness, rushed through me. I sank upon my knees in tears. I did not pray, at least not with words; but my whole soul, my whole state of mind, at this moment, was no other than the cry, 'Lord—Lord, have have mercy upon me!'

"A deep stillness ensued. The low rustling of the trees in the churchyard was heard. I seemed to feel as if a breath passed over my soul; I lifted up my eyes, Edward Hervey stood in the pulpit with serious and beaming eyes. From the very moment in which he began to speak my soul hung upon his words. I listened, I understood, as never before in my life I had listened and understood.

"He spoke of the life which is the fountain, wherein all existences find each other again in joy; of the life which makes clear the whole world and endeavours of man; of the life without which all things are dark and separated; of the life which unites all and enlightens all,—he spoke of love. He looked with a glance of fire into every human heart, and spoke to one and to all. He censured the laxity which tolerated, and the severity which blamed everything. He invited all to purity, to holiness, to inward serenity.

"'Think not,' said he 'that earth is a vale of grief. Think not, my friends, that this world is only a place of trial and affliction. God wills not that it is so. Has not infinite love consecrated it even as His dwelling-place, and has revealed therein the fulness of his being? Let us have love one for another, even as he has loved us, and we shall then comprehend that fulness. Let us love God; let us love one another, and then we shall see how light will life and its cares appear to be. Let every one ask himself the occasion of his sufferings, and he will find that it is no other than want of love either in himself or in others. On the soil of unkindness grow envy, hatred, revenge—the bitterest poison-plants of life. But sanctify your endeavours in love, acknowledge one another in love; then, my friends, joy and peace will soon reign in the homes of mortality. Such is the will of

our God. The God of love is also the God of joy; for love is joy, is endless happiness.

“I repeat it; let us have love one to another, even as God has loved us, then will there be joy on earth; friend will be united to friend, and no one will stand alone in life. So let us live, so let us one with another wander through these days of earthly existence; and when the evening comes, let us bless the field upon which we played as children, and say to the Giver of all good, Father, thou callest me from earth, I come willingly to thee; I know that thy love is eternal as Thou art, and as the gifts are which proceed from Thee. My sphere of action, my innocent joys, hast Thou preserved for me in heaven, where I shall yet learn better to know and love Thee.’

“I have, I know, given here only very feebly the beautiful words as they remain in my memory.

“What description indeed would be able to give again the power of the voice and the look, as well as the expression of soul which lay in every word? Ah! this doctrine of love and joy, as Hervey delivered it, whose inmost life is love and joy, took hold of my very soul. A strange light penetrated my heart; a joy, never known till then, took possession of my soul, and from thence what life, what peace reigned therein! So, some time, will dawn the morning of the eternal life upon the again-arisen children of earth. I buried my face in my hands, and let my tears flow. Yet never had they flowed before from so pleasing a pain. There was the hope of a new life, the foretaste of a never-experienced happiness; there was adoration in my tears. So sate I, given up to my feelings, till a hallelujah sounded forth, as sweetly and as strong as if it had been sung by the voices of angels. Hervey stood before the altar and praised God. The heavens looked blue and bright through the high church-window. The angels upon the altar-piece seemed to smile and to whisper to me, ‘Joy, joy!’ And I stood up joyfully with the community to give thanks, to sing praises. My whole soul was a hallelujah! When, at last, I heard Hervey’s voice blessing me, and all of us, I felt blessed in reality; I felt that the Lord had turned his countenance towards me.

“From this day a great change had taken place in me. The whole world seemed to me remodelled. It was not only

the deep emotion which the moment had called forth, it was Hervey's presence, his conversation, his influence, which produced this change. Life and the world became clear to me—it was light within my soul. I awoke out of my long dream in order to love and adore. To love—yes! I loved Hervey, and through him God, nature, and life. But it was a long time before I knew that it was love to him which beautified my world, and made my inward self clear. This sentiment sprang up in me like life itself. I wished he was my brother, and I a member of his family—of that family where I saw him so beloved, so worshipped,—of that family where piety, education, and gaiety, made life so rich,—where every day had its meaning, its sunshine. Oh! it was this quiet, simple, holy, and yet cheerful life which my soul so much needed,—that was the true atmosphere of home for my existence.

“I will not long tarry over the description of the changing sentiments of my soul, till the moment arrived when it became plain to me that our two existences were but one—that we belonged eternally to each other. I have trembled between the deepest despair and the highest happiness. I am calmer now, for I know one thing, and in this alone lies calmness, clearness, and happiness enough; I know that he loves me, and that no separation, no death, can rend our hearts from each other. Edla shall decide my fate. We have both of us determined to bind ourselves by no promise before her return and without her consent. But no other than Hervey shall call me wife. Count Ludwig is nothing more to me, nor can I either be anything more to him; he would have in me only a half-dead being, only a half Nina. Hervey has called me back to life; to him my life belongs. Ah! I feel indeed that it is more his than mine. O Clara! with him and through him I could become a God-pleasing being, and one useful to my fellow-creatures. Like him would I give joy to human hearts—would sit by the suffering bed of the sick—would teach little children to be good and love God, who encompasses them all with love. The labour would be dear to me, the trouble would be light. Care and want would I strongly endure—all for him; only to hear one approving word from his lips, for one glance from his eyes. There would be an end of my dreamy life; I should acquire human worth.

“Hervey shall not leave the path which he has chosen. He chose his profession from love. To accompany him on this path is the only lot which I wish for myself. Ah! the best, the highest! No rank, no position in society, is higher than the being his worthy wife. How charming to form a portion of his life! How willingly would I be only the light which shines upon him at his labour, only the breath which fans his brow. What can I want by Hervey’s side? He has love and wisdom enough to make a whole world happy. His home, *my* home; the daily beloved cares for him and for those who are dear to him, how pleasantly will they fill up my days! Woe to me, if I, with such a life, could experience want—if my heart did not every morning and every evening send forth the warm sacrifice of thanks for my happy lot! Then may the days and years roll on. Whatever trials, whatever cares, they may bring with them, I fear them not. He will be near to me, will love me, will show me heaven. Stands he by my death-bed, and lightens me with his glance, I fear no gloomy thoughts. I will look upon him and God, whom he sees. He will bless my grave, and its terror will vanish. With him is light and life, with him is heaven. Eternity, infinitude, before your depths I no longer grow dizzy; his pinions sustain me, he hides me in his bosom—

“Yet hold—hold! What have I said? Whither does this blessed dream lead me? Edla, my high, pure Edla, wilt thou awaken me from it? Wilt thou make thy child unhappy? Oh no, Edla, that canst thou not—that wilt thou not! Edla knows not yet of my love; I have not ventured to write to her of it. She has seen me so weak, she would not now understand my feelings. Edla must know Hervey, and then she will love him. Their souls are made to understand each other. Edla will desire our happiness. Should she not—good God! my hand trembles, my mind grows weak, at the very thought of her not consenting. Clara, I feel at the same time a necessity of happiness and joy—a desire to enjoy life, as I know it may be enjoyed; it is indescribable. If, however, it should be so required that this must be renounced—were the question only of *my own* happiness—I think I could be resigned, and say with you, ‘What does it signify if a person suffer?’ But, Hervey! Hervey! Oh, it is as if a thousand voices cried to me this

beloved name! Hervey loves me. It concerns also his happiness. My heart quakes at the thought of contest against Edla's wishes—yes; but I cannot leave Edward Hervey. Almighty God, guide me, and incline Edla's heart to him who is my life. Perhaps the moment already advances with giant footsteps which shall decide all; with me it is a matter of life and death. Yet I cannot mistrust the future; at least not now, when I yet see Hervey I must hope in a life full of happiness. Who, indeed, would not love Edward Hervey? Edla will wish my happiness.

“I have fulfilled your wish, Clara. I have only spoken of him and me; I have not talked with you nor of you. One word, however, let me say—it comes from my inmost heart. I know that you are superior, far superior, to me, and that strengthens my soul; it does me good when I think upon you. O Clara! good, affectionate Clara! if I should be hardly tried,—if I should be doomed to renounce the happiness of life—then—will you stand by me? will you then come to

NINA.”

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MORE LETTERS.

There dwells within the human heart
Music most strange and wonderful.—GEIJER.

ABOUT the same time that the two young friends corresponded, as we have seen, with each other, a friend of Count Ludwig's wrote to him, from whose letter we will communicate the following passage:

“I would not make you uneasy, but I must at least warn you. Endeavour to return as early as possible, otherwise you may lose your bride. A certain Edward Hervey, who before the committal of a certain crime bore the name of Edward D., threatens to contest your pretensions. I recognised him, although he is somewhat altered; you know, however, that my eye is certain. Besides this, I happened by chance to see the scar upon his breast, the cause of which you know as well as I do. This Edward D. is at this time the pastor of the community to which the Countess H—— belongs. In some incomprehensible manner here all is a secret, and nobody

knows anything of his earlier life. He is universally beloved, and exercises a great influence on his community. People say that he has endeavoured to win Miss Nina's heart, and that he has succeeded in so doing. As I live somewhat distant from the Countess, I have had only once an opportunity of seeing Miss Nina with this person. I saw nothing which could have given occasion to the report, and yet, at the same time, enough to make me counsel you to return as soon as possible. There exists no confidence between them, but yet a certain something between them which is very much like actual love. Miss Nina is beautiful as the goddess of love, and this Hervey is, in fact, an uncommonly interesting man."

We know now sufficiently of the spark which fell into the already charged mine.

Edla's letters for some time had contained merely tidings of the decreasing strength of her father.

"His condition is free from pain," she wrote; "his temper is milder and kinder than ever: but he becomes every day weaker, his memory more confused, and his consciousness dimmer. I have rented a pretty little villa in the neighbourhood of the city, and here my father can enjoy the fresh air, and the physician can visit him every day. He is, thank God, still capable of enjoyment. He walks in the garden, leaning on my arm, plucks oranges from the trees, and is delighted with the beautiful fruit; he smokes his pipe in the shade of the trees, and enjoys himself in the soft air. He is happy. He often mentions Nina's name, thinks she is married to Count Ludwig, and is happy in thinking so.

"They give me no hope of his recovery; I however, cannot give this up. The mild climate has already operated so revivifying upon many in a state similar to his. May it, however, please God! My love, my dearest duty is to make his days easy and agreeable, be they many or be they few."

The thought of the probable decease of her father diffused a quiet sadness over the soul of Nina. But Hervey's presence, his liveliness, his care, prevented her from giving herself up wholly to depressing thoughts; he was more than ever to her, all—law and gospel.

In the mean time it was summer; nature was gloriously adorned—the harvest ripened—life was in full bloom, and

our lovers saw each other daily. I know, my dear reader, that which thou hopest: anguish and strife of love—pain—frenzy—reconciliation—rapture—storm—passion; at last, a little murder or a secret marriage, and such like.—Honour be to virtue and true strength! Nothing of all this have I to relate. Hervey would not win Nina with craft, but with perfect openness would ask her hand from those who had the right to dispose of it. He knew her heart—he had heard her prayer, and on that account he would not ask from her any binding promise. He wished that she should decide her own and his fate without any interference. On that account he watched over himself with the severity of an anchorite, and over her with the heavenly love of an angel. Resolved to venture the very extremest to possess her, he awaited with the deepest impatience the moment in which he might act—the arrival of Edla and Count Ludwig. Nina, in the mean time was happy—that was all which Hervey desired. He surrounded her with an unceasing spring, and never gloomed even the least cloud these blessed days. By his love and by his teaching he strengthened and elevated her soul; and whenever the fervour of his feelings would have burst the bonds which he had imposed upon them, then he left her, and endeavoured by labour and pains to regain strength and tranquillity; and then, like a blessing of heaven, he came back to her. Was he unable to conceal from her the struggle or the melancholy of his soul, and her tender, questioning glance sought his, then said he, “Nina, you know why.” She knew it—she gave him her hand, and they understood each other.

The Countess, deeply occupied with the Colonel, industriously pretended ignorance regarding the connexion between Hervey and Nina. She wished by that means to escape from the blushes over her own inclination,—she saw also, perhaps, not unwillingly, a rock springing up in Edla’s path. The coldness and dislike which she had always cherished for Edla, had degenerated by degrees into actual hatred. We will see in what way.

The Countess felt that since the affair at Ramlösa, Edla could no longer esteem her. Edla, without ever asking her opinion, had arranged for Nina’s betrothal with Count Ludwig, and had treated her, since the illness of the President, with coldness both by word of mouth and by letter. The

Countess knew very well that she deserved no better; yet this did not prevent the arising of a certain bitterness against Edla—a bitterness which was only heightened the more from the following circumstance.

The Countess had earlier been declared the idol of every great coterie, which consisted of nearly all the intellectual of Sweden from the north to the south. At that time people only spoke of Edla, to assert her to be the ugliest and most disagreeable creature on the whole earth. Now, on the contrary, the star of the Countess was setting, Edla's had begun to ascend, and was now in its zenith. Travelling Swedes, who visited the President in Nizza, could not relate enough of Edla's self-denial; and praised the prudence which she exhibited in her care and attention to her feeble, irritable father. Edla's behaviour began to be a universal subject of conversation, and as a sort of antithesis to that of the Countess was exalted and praised. People gave her the surname of Antigone, and next to her filial virtue they celebrated her "intellectuality," her modesty, and her pure and excellent character. The correspondents of the Countess—and she had very many of these—wearied her with their incessant outbreaks of praise of Edla-Antigone, often accompanied by not unintelligible hints at the part which the Countess, the wife of the President, played, in comparison with his daughter. Several floating rumours about the handsome Herculean Colonel gave a degree of causticity to these hints, which the Countess felt in their full keenness. She revenged herself by hatred against Edla; and thus represented her as a proud, power-loving being, who sought to triumph over her.

In a short time the Colonel took a journey. During his absence the Countess seemed to recover somewhat of the former tenderness to Nina. Yet still, even in her tenderness there lay egotism; she would, as it were, adorn herself with Nina. She had for a long time been envious of the admiration which Nina cherished for Edla; and now that she calculated upon Edla's speedy return, she began to labour to turn away a heart to which Edla was so dear. She spoke often to Nina of her sister, and commended her in such a way as was secretly designed to cool Nina's heart towards her.

"She is a most uncommon person," said she sometimes;

“so strong, so calm, so assured. Happy she who has not to combat against a weak and yielding heart!”

Again she would say, “Edla belongs rather to heaven than earth. She needs nothing of that which constitutes the happiness of others. She is sufficient to herself.”

Or, “Edla loves humanity; the human being is nothing to her. She would be always ready to sacrifice the well-being of the few to what she considered the well-being of the whole.”

“Edla ought to be king or prime minister,” said she among other things, “for she has a strong and determined will. For the carrying out of a great plan she never asks who she sacrifices. There is something of Charles XI. in her.”

By degrees also the Countess began to express her disinclination for Count Ludwig, as well as her astonishment at Edla’s great inclination for him, and to let a suspicion gleam through, that perhaps a tenderer sentiment towards Count Ludwig made Edla blind to his failings, and with this the Countess sometimes cast a pitying glance on Nina.

In Nina’s present position, and in the state of mind between hope and fear in which she was, the words of the Countess could not remain without their influence. Besides this she also came pretty near the truth, and there mingled therefore with Nina’s feeling a certain bitterness. Her feelings towards Edla changed more and more into fear. Edla’s image melted by degrees into that of Count Ludwig. She turned her soul away from her sister, and bound it ever more inwardly, more strongly, to the mild, strong, affectionate heart of Hervey. On the side of Edla and Count Ludwig, life appeared so cold, so joyless, so pale. On that of Hervey, ah! it was life itself—warm, bright—life full of love and joy. Without Nina remarking it, she came into opposition to Edla. She thought herself capable of complying with her wishes, and in reality was so no longer.

The summer was uncommonly hot and dry. It was now the beginning of August. The Countess, who endeavoured in every way to make herself popular, and if possible to be missed as a joy-dispensing divinity when she left the country in the autumn, had determined to give to her tenants and all her neighbours a highly original harvest-festival. It was her intention to have a Sunday-dance for the peasants; and for this purpose she had had, on the plain not far distant from the Ume river, a beautiful pleasure-house erected, the upper

story of which furnished a large dancing-room, and the ground floor several pretty apartments. This light and agreeable building, called the Rotunda by the Countess, was surrounded by birches, which lent their shade. Hither, shortly before the festival, the Countess removed with Nina; partly, as she said, in order to have everything in readiness for the same, and partly because here they found coolness, which upon the bald height where the castle stood it was in vain to seek. The Countess, besides this, had in truth another scheme *in petto*; but of that we will not talk just yet.

Everything was ready for the rural festivity; nothing was spared, in order that it might be as brilliant as possible—when the tidings of death came, and put an end to all. Two letters from Edla arrived at the same moment. One, that of the earliest date, contained intelligence of the death of the President. “He fell asleep softly,” wrote Edla, “without pain, without bitter presentiment of his departure. It is scarcely possible to die easier, and I thank God for his tranquil release. A few hours before his death he ate fruit, and that with considerable appetite. He was to the last moment kind and amiable towards every one, and shortly before his decease he fully recovered his mind. I have tender greetings from him to all those who were dear to him, especially to Nina. I have had the indescribable joy of dividing during the last days the care of my father with Count Ludwig. My father thanked him in words for his filial attention to him.

“‘Nina will reward you,’ said he; ‘may she be all which I wish for you!’”

The other letter was of a date fourteen days later. Edla spoke therein of the interment of her father, and of her speedy return to Sweden. “I long,” wrote she, “to see again the dear old cliffs. I long to embrace my Nina, and to unite her to her worthy husband. I return not alone—Count Ludwig follows my footsteps.”

Edla said a few words respecting herself in the postscript. “I have,” she wrote, “during the long nights by the sick-bed of my father, arranged the plan of a little work, the materials for which have lain collected in my mind for some time. It treats on intellectual education, particularly as regards my own sex. Its doctrines are the offspring of my own experience—of my own sufferings; and on this ground alone, I dare to hope that, amid the many books of this kind, mine may not be without its worth. I have sent a prospectus

of it to Professor A. He will tell me whether my work answers its design."

Quietly and deeply wept Nina for her father; but this long-expected sorrow was not bitter. A deeper pang, mingled with fear, took possession of Nina's soul on the receipt of these letters.

Edla returned full of schemes and thoughts, which in part were totally strange to Nina, and in part militated entirely against the happiness of her life. Nina, so full of love, so full of longing after a happiness of which Edla had no conception, felt at this moment only fear of Edla's heaven. She wished for her return, and yet trembled at it, for Edla exercised a power over her soul which no fear and no doubt of her tenderness could lessen.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.—FOREBODINGS.

There blows through human life
A waft of death.—TEGNER.

THEY expected Edla, yet without knowing the day of her return. Hervey's apparent calmness and her love to him kept up Nina's strength. She felt more and more that she could dare all for him, only not give him up.

A small company was assembled one evening with the Countess. The neighbours admired the charming pleasure-house; drank lemonade, sate on the benches in the shade of the birches, talked politics, jested, and found themselves in excellent spirits. Edward Hervey alone this evening was not in his usual mood. With a certain quick impatience he broke off every conversation which one or other of the guests endeavoured to commence with him, and in his usually so friendly and open glance there lay a gloomy shadow. At length he turned himself to a corpulent, lively gentleman, and inquired from him abruptly:

"Are you a believer in forebodings?"

"I must acknowledge," returned the other, "that according to my own experience, or much more to that of my wife, I do believe on forebodings as well as on dreams."

"How?" inquired Hervey.

"Well! in the last summer—allow me—no! in the summer before last, my wife dreamed that three of our best cows died of the diseased spleen. She told me her dream—it was on a Wednesday morning—no—on a Thursday it was. On

Friday evening all three cows were dead! What say you now to that, Pastor Hervey?"

"I believe," said one of the company who had heard Hervey's question, "that one has had too many proofs of warnings and dreams wholly to doubt of their foreshadowings. It is a universally known fact, that, a short time before his death, Henry IV. heard a continual funeral cry, which filled him with anxious disquiet. The apparition which Brutus saw before the battle of Philippi, Napoleon's warning in Egypt, and many such like examples, appear to me to belong to the family of forebodings, whose mystical appearances are as inexplicable as their power is undeniable."

"I myself," said the Countess, "have gone through life without making the least acquaintance with them. Yet I have seen their influence of the most sorrowful kind upon persons extremely dear to me. One of my near relations, a young lively, amiable lady, who was most happily married, was about a year after her marriage possessed by a most sad presentiment of impending misfortune, for which she could not assign the slightest reason. In vain she endeavoured to argue herself into consolation and reason; in vain her husband sought to banish by the tenderest care this preternatural feeling from her soul; it pursued her continually. It threw a black veil over the brightest day and even the most charming scenes of nature; in the most joyous tones of the gayest waltz she heard but sounds of mourning, even joy and laughter were to her only spectral tones. Her husband, in despair at this unhappy state of mind, determined to conduct her to her nearest and dearest relations, hoping that the journey and new scenes would dissipate her melancholy. His hopes appeared to be accomplished; she thanked him for his affectionate anxiety with redoubled tenderness. Every one exerted himself to enliven her and to divert her thoughts, and before so many friendly endeavours the dark forebodings seemed as if they must depart.

"After the young couple had passed several weeks, during the Christmas and New-Year's festivities, in the country amid the most agreeable circle, the amiable Rosina had evidently improved; all anxious forebodings seemed to have vanished. One day the young couple drove over the frozen lake on a visit to a kind neighbour, with whom they very pleasantly took dinner, and spent part of the evening. Late in the moonlight they set out to return. Shortly however before she left

the house, Rosina was alone, when suddenly she heard indescribably charming music before the window. She listened attentively, and plainly distinguished a funeral hymn. Trembling, she hastened to the window and withdrew the curtain; a beautiful boy stood without, in the clear moonlight winter night, and sang thus sweetly in this mournful manner. At her appearance he withdrew, seemed to dissolve into air, and the sounds died away in sighs. Deeply shocked, and again taken possession of by her sad forebodings, Rosina, pale as death, hastened to her husband, and imparted to him the circumstance and her grievous anxiety. She conjured him not to set out this night; the kind inhabitants of the house united their wishes and prayers to hers—but in vain. Rosina's husband was quite out of humour with the return of her diseased imagination, and resolved at once to oppose with the full force of his determination these spectral ideas. For the first time in his life he was deaf to her prayers and tears. He led her to the carriage, placed himself close beside her, and held her to his breast. With sorrow and submission she clung to him, spoke a mournful farewell to those who stood round,—lay silently on the breast of her husband, and waited for that which should happen.

“Thick clouds in the mean time had come over the heavens, and concealed the moon; a strongly increasing wind soon blew out the lamps. The coachman was not perfectly sober, which, on account of the disquiet at their setting out, had not been observed. In the closed carriage all was still and dark; the horses sprang forward gaily on the smooth ice, and made their bells ring merrily. Suddenly, however, all was hushed. The ice cracked—the windows flew open—the water rushed in, and all vanished in a large opening in the ice! People found afterwards the corpses of the young couple, clasped still in death together!”

Nina's tears flowed. “This was not a bitter death,” whispered she; “it need not have been foretold by such sad presentiments.”

Hervey contemplated her with an inexpressible glance.

The company was silent for some time; for the relation of the Countess had not been made without effect. Presently they related other experiences of this kind.

“I knew very intimately,” said some one, “a highly rational family, in which all incidents which occurred in it were announced by a nightly apparition.”

“With this faith in apparitions and warnings,” said now one of the gentlemen with great warmth, “is however the door opened to the most foolish superstition and the absurdest imaginings. I am convinced that no one can ever have a stronger presentiment than was that which accompanied me through the years of my boyhood. I fancied, namely, firmly and fast, that I was to be torn to pieces by a lion; and yet here stand I now healthy and vigorous, without having ever even seen a lion, excepting in copper-plate engravings, and hope also to go on thus, and to die a peaceful death in my bed. My sister, who read Mrs. Radcliffe’s romances, had a presentiment, as strong as mine, that she was to be carried off by a pirate, and to become a Sultana in Turkey. But even to the present time, when she is fifty years old, she has not even found a lover! Seriously, I believe that one may with certainty maintain that out of twenty remarkable fore-warnings, one at the most is fulfilled; but even for that there is some simple and sufficient ground. For how natural is it that feelings and thoughts, which have occupied themselves for long with one object, influence the imagination, and bring before it feverish images. In our changing world it is not difficult to stumble upon circumstances which accord with this or that presentiment; and the imagination which is thus called forth, sets about to make reality yet more to suit it. Many a warning also is first noticed after the occurrence.”

“Granted,” replied Hervey; “and yet there is an infinite number which cannot be so easily explained. One piece of experience, which goes through the whole history, shows this, that there is a dark, mystical side of human existence, which appears to follow no determined laws, but which makes man acknowledge that he is surrounded by a spiritual world, whose power exercises a certain influence upon his whole life. Impossible as it may be for us to explain these phenomena, it is just as impossible for us to deny their existence. Probably they belong to the universal wise ordination of things, which we shall first comprehend on the other side of this world. The All-merciful would certainly have spared us the pang which the unintelligibility and the inexplicability of such passing impressions occasion us, had it lain in the ordination of his eternal and holy laws.”

The tone in which Hervey said this expressed such a deep depression of mind, that Nina’s eyes were rivetted upon him with uneasiness and tenderness.

“I fancy that we, in these days,” said Mr. N. with a well-bred air and a reproving manner, “are far removed from ghost and omen; and I confess, best Pastor Hervey, that I had taken you for a far more rational man.”

Hervey smiled. He smiled indeed as an angel might smile over the conceited wisdom of a human being. Nina’s lovely affectionate eyes met his with the most heartfelt intelligence. He turned himself kindly to his neighbour and said, “Above all things would it be foolish to allow these dark suggestions too great a power over us; and for this purpose means have been provided, for this purpose the sun is in heaven, and the human eye speaks kindness, truth, and beauty. What shadows are they which would not flee before these?”

At this moment a letter was given to him, which he hastily opened, and then left the company. Sunk in thought, Nina walked down to the river, whose restless waves seemed to-day to roll about more violently than common.

Here it was that Hervey sought her. Great uneasiness and excitement were expressed in his features.

“I must leave you,” said he; “I must take a journey.” He gave to her the letter, which contained the following lines, written by a trembling hand:

“If you would mitigate the pangs of conscience of a dying man; if you would see an important secret brought to light, hasten without delay to W. Inquire in the inn there for a man of the name of Erik B. He will conduct you to the writer of these lines. But travel day and night; for I am weak, and my hours are numbered.”

Nina, turning pale, gave him back the letter, whilst she said:

“You must hence! O quick, quick—ah, the unfortunate!”

A lively hope that the secret referred to might concern himself, and might unbind the fetters of his life, awoke in Hervey’s soul; but the joy of this was almost crushed by the thoughts of separation. The letter came from a distant place out of another province; Hervey’s absence must continue for several days. Edla might come in the mean time—Count Ludwig—Nina remained alone with them! This thought filled him with unspeakable distress. He could not conceal his disquiet—his deep pain of heart. Nina was now the gently consoling, sustaining friend, only it was a long time before he could listen to her words. He went and came; wished to speak and was silent. Suddenly he violently seized her hand, and exclaimed, “Vow to me—swear

to me—no!" interrupted he himself, letting her go, "no—no oath!" He tore himself from her, walked backwards and forwards, then turned to her, looked at her with inexpressible love, and said slowly and firmly:

"I will not—I cannot lose you!" He held her hands in his, pressed them to his burning face, and Nina felt his hot tears upon them.

Nina also wept, but she found words to comfort and strengthen herself. "What shall be able to separate us?" said she with such warmth, as if she would overcome the future by its power. "Have I not freedom to speak and to act? Believe me, Edla shall not—cannot divide us. Ah, Edward! you are more to me than her, than the whole world. Since I have loved you, I am weak no longer. I have strength to withstand circumstances; nay, I feel that I could even oppose the will of my sister. But Edla will see and feel that there is no life, no joy on earth, no bliss in heaven, only in you and with you! Edward, I will pray, conjure—ah, I know it, I am sure of it, I can move her. She cannot sever me from you!"

Nina spoke long, warmly, tenderly, full of the sweetest affection. Hervey listened to her, whilst his eye devoured her. A violent desire to clasp her to his heart, to call her his bride, burned in his soul. He wished thereby to conjure the anxious foreboding which spoke continually of severing, and at the same time to bind Nina to him for ever. Burning with pain and love, he clasped her—she looked at him terrified, and he asked with glowing eye, "Nina?"

"Beloved!" replied the quiet, pale, touching form. "It is in your power to make me happy or miserable. Do you see the waves at my feet? Throw me into their depths; I will be still and not complain. I should tremble less at that, than that you should forget your vow, and my prayers. Edward, kill me rather! Ah, death would be sweet to me from your beloved hand!"

At these words and tones the wild passion laid itself in Hervey's breast. He bent his knee before that adored being, and pressed her hands violently to his breast and forehead.

"Nina, forgive me," exclaimed he with agitated voice; "but do not forget that my life's well-being lies in your hands."

With these words he tore himself from her and disappeared.

Stupified with suffering, Nina sat down on a piece of rock on the river's shore. She had never before seen Hervey so violent or so excited. Tears, prayers, and a thousand softly-

breathed forth vows of love, brought at length tranquillity back to her heart: her whole soul was only one thought—one feeling for him.

The day after this parting Nina spent with Hervey's mother. She felt an inward need of obtaining strength and calmness from the excellent old lady. She longed so heartily to hear his sister Maria speak of her beloved brother. Hervey's mother received Nina with open arms, and as a mother pressed her to her breast. For the first time she spoke with Nina of her son's hopes. She was too proud of him for the higher birth of his beloved to occasion her any embarrassment. To her it seemed so natural, so necessary to love him, and to wish to belong to him. Besides this she expressed such warm wishes for his happiness, and such a motherly love for Nina, as penetrated her heart with the sweetest hopes and feelings. Maria was gay and happy, and set before her the best and the fairest which the house contained, and this was, thanks to her own skilfulness, not a little. Nina sang enchantingly, and drew tears from her listeners. What warm, beautiful words were spoken of Edward Hervey! Nina listened to them with a happy heart. This day was friendly and charming, as days always are to kind intelligent people who share in one deep, common interest.

In the evening Maria accompanied Nina on her way home. The heaven was gloomy and the air sultry, yet the two young friends remarked it not. Nina sang by the way a little song which was Maria's favourite. Maria wove for Nina a garland of the large forget-me-not. The heavenly blue glory became that loving Madonna's countenance bewitchingly.

They parted at Nina's Rest. Maria kissed her tenderly and went back. Nina stood by the brook, and saw her face in its pure mirror; it looked so heavenly with its azure garland and with the green surrounding bushes. Nina thought herself lovely; she felt it with joy, for her beauty was for Hervey. With this, with everything she possessed of good, with the gifts of fortune and education, would she wind herself as a flower-tendril in his life. It was a moment in which her soul, full of the image of her beloved, swam in the purest happiness.

At this very moment she felt herself softly embraced. She looked around her, and was in Edla's arms. A slight shudder passed through her. She felt herself taken possession of by fate—by a separating fate—and Edla's grave

features appeared in the deep mourning dress still sterner and paler than common. Yet no severity reigned in Edla's heart; she never had been tenderer, and soon Nina lay with child-like submission on her breast.

After the first outburst of feeling Edla stepped back, and surveyed Nina with joy and amazement. Nina's beauty had now reached its most splendid development, and was in fact bewitching. She was no more the pale, feeble girl, which a breath threatened to destroy; she was a blooming Hebe, full of health and life. Tears of the purest joy filled Edla's eyes, and she pressed her enchanting sister again to her heart. Nina's silence, her tears, and her visible constraint, distressed Edla, but she took no notice of it. She seated herself quietly beside Nina on the turf bench, and told her of her father, and of his last days, speaking all the while in so gentle a manner that Nina's emotion by degrees calmed itself. There is nothing so well calculated to still the uneasy beating of the heart for earthly weal or woe, as thoughts of the moment when all things cease to us, and all things change around us. There was also in Edla's voice and in her whole being an uncommon softness which did Nina good to her very heart. She involuntarily took courage for the future, and she breathed more lightly.

"And now," said Edla at length, "I have a prayer to you. Come into the castle with me, and I have much to say to you, and—I expect this evening still a visit; it has reference particularly to you, and will not surprise you, Nina. Count Ludwig accompanied me. A year is passed since you separated. Nina, I bring you your father's blessing upon your approaching union. In the clear moments which he had before his death he spoke only of your marriage with Count Ludwig, and sent to his darling the prayer to make the noblest of men happy. Come, Nina, our mother will allow us to pass this first evening alone with each other,—come, that I may lay your hand in that of the most excellent of men."

Nina knew no dissimulation, and it would have been impossible to her to have been false to Edla. Prudence would, it is true, have counselled her to have deferred the dreaded acknowledgment; but the surprise, her customary candour, and an inward impulse of heart to be open towards her sister, accelerated the dangerous declaration.

"Edla!—Edla!" stammered Nina trembling, and with pale lips, "I cannot go with you now!"

Edla also now turned pale, and laid her hand violently on her breast, as if she would stifle a pain which was there. Yet she collected herself, and spoke with almost beseeching voice.

“And why not now? Why not now? Ah! this now I have so long waited for—so longingly expected! I have so rejoiced myself over this now, in which I should again see my Nina, the child of my heart—in which I should find her willing to follow me, and to fulfil the last prayer of our father! Why not now?”—“Edla! Edla! ah, do not talk to me so,” besought the deeply agitated Nina.

“And why not so?” asked Edla gravely. “Why this emotion—these violent tears? Nina, what is amiss with you?”

“Edla, let me lie here—here at your feet. Let me open my whole heart to you!” cried Nina, as she sank before her sister on her knee, and hid her face in her hands. “Edla! be not severe towards me. Edla—my sister, my second mother!”

“Very well?” asked Edla with impatience.—“Very well, Edla! I cannot see Count Ludwig again without explaining to you and him—that I cannot belong to him,—that my whole soul, that my whole heart, belongs to another!”

Edla turned away. “So then it is true,” said she with deep pain, “that which they told me—that which I have so violently contended against—that which Nina dared not to discover to her sister! Nina! Nina, remember Don Juan!”

Nina raised herself. Humble, but full of self-respect, she said with glowing cheek—“I remember it, Edla! and with abhorrence for the weak creature that I then was; I remember that man only the more inwardly to love and to admire Edward Hervey.”

“Edward Hervey!” exclaimed Edla with a cry of horror; “Edward Hervey then is his name? Thus then it is true. O my God! unfortunate, deceived sister!”

Nina looked on her sister with calm self-possession.

“Nina,” continued Edla, “when I tell you that the man whom you love is an unworthy person; that he has deceived you; that his amiability is only the glistening cloak of a false soul; his goodness, sensual weakness; that he deceived his friend and benefactor, whose sister he seduced, and whose death he occasioned; that he has violated the most sacred duties,—will you then still love him?”

“Edla,” replied Nina, “I know that a gloomy mystery rests upon his life; I know that a charge has been made against him of which he is not guilty. He will be able some

time to justify himself; but should he not be able to do so, still he is innocent! I know it—he is innocent!”

“And if I produced a witness,” said Edla, “of that which I tell you, and you will not believe? If Count Ludwig were the friend whom he deceived, and whose sister he made unfortunate——” —“Notwithstanding, I would not believe it,” cried Nina. “Neither him nor any man would I believe who told me what was bad of Edward Hervey. I will pledge my life for his innocence.”

Edla saw Nina's violent agitation of mind. She compelled herself to be calm, seized the hand of her sister, and drew her gently beside her on the turf seat. “Listen to me calmly, my Nina,” prayed she; “let your feeling, your own sense, decide between us. I confess that your union with Count Ludwig was one of my favourite ideas. I have known him from his youth, and have never seen him other than noble, upright, and firm. It appeared to me that he was the most proper support for you; it appeared to me that you were pre-eminently made to beautify his life, and to moderate and soften the stern material of his character. I saw you pass through life happy and virtuous. Ah! I saw more than that. O Nina! I had such beautiful dreams. I must tell you. I saw Count Ludwig made gentle and happy by you, and his beneficent influence widely diffused around. I saw—ah, it was a blessed sight!—through your united activity, much good brought about, much light arise for our country. It seemed to me as if I saw humanity advanced by you, supported and assisted by you in their demands for happiness and right. I hoped to hear the blessings of the world pronounced upon you—to see the mercy of heaven beam around your beloved head. Tell me, Nina, has such a life, such an activity, no worth for you? Is the time passed in which your heart beat warmly for it? Is your own little happiness more dear to you than the well-being of humanity?”

“Oh no, no!” cried Nina with tears; “but, Edla——”

“Listen to me further,” interrupted Edla, “I have yet much to say to you. Then I will listen to you. Nina! with these thoughts, with these long-cherished dear hopes, I come now back. Count Ludwig has, by the blessing of your father, still juster pretensions to you; and you, Nina, you now step back. All these reasons are nothing to you. You love another. Your own satisfaction, the accomplishment of your own wishes, are all you think of. Everything else is nothing,

Nina. If it only came to the giving up of my own dearest wishes—to the sacrificing the joy and hope of my life for your happiness,—if this happiness could only last—the man whom you love were worthy of you,—then I would not ask whether he be of humble birth, whether his sphere of action be narrow and unknown; the shed small and hidden in which the flower whose beauty enchanted my heart has withdrawn from the eye of the world—for everywhere will it diffuse its heavenly fragrance—yes, Nina, the deepest wishes of my heart, my life itself, would I sacrifice for your happiness, if it actually were happiness. But the man whom you love is unworthy——”

“He is not!” exclaimed Nina with strong emotion. “Edla, see him, hear him, become acquainted with him, before you pass judgment on him and me. Contemplate his actions, his human love; listen, how there is only one voice respecting him; inquire in the dwellings of the poor, where he is an angel of love and compassion. Ah, Edla! my soul was without strength, my life without value, till I knew him. Through him have I gained courage and will to act. Everything which you taught me, Edla, to love and to admire, all that love I and admire in him. Part us not, Edla! My father would not have parted us, had he known Hervey. Become acquainted with him, and you yourself will love and trust him. Still no sacred oath binds us. You alone shall decide our fate; such are my wishes, such are his. But sever us not, Edla! I could not bear it. Sever not the flower from the stem, from its root. Hervey is my stem, my root; separated from him my life would consume, would waste away. With Count Ludwig—O Edla, do not deceive yourself!—I should never have fulfilled your expectations. Without love, without happiness, I should be only feeble and helpless as I was; I should dream away my life. Listen to me, Edla! Let me pray you—let me move you. Sever us not from each other; or I might say, Why did you place yourself between me and death, as he would have laid me in my early grave? I should then never have experienced the weariness of existence, the heaven of life and of love; I should have known no combat, no longing; I need not now have stood before you to beg from you my own happiness. Oh! if you will not extinguish for ever the light of earth which you re-awoke on that night—if you will not make cold the heart which your love then warmed—Edla, oh give to me life anew—con-

demn not my love—bless him whom I love—sever us not—sever us not!

“You say,” continued Nina, speaking more calmly, “that he has violated sacred duties. Edla, that is slander. It is possible that he never may be able to free himself from the shadow which an incomprehensible fate has thrown over his pure life. He himself has prepared me for this. It may be. What matters that, my Edla? God sees the heart; and human life is not so long. I will share his fate; I will help to bear his shame, if shame can rest on his head. Life, death, care, want, all are dear to me by his side. A higher power has for ever united our souls. Part us not from each other, Edla.”—Edla’s tears flowed. “So much love,” said she, half aloud to herself, “and that for a deceiver!”

“He is no deceiver!” asserted Nina with the deepest conviction. “So surely as I believe on the eternal goodness and truth of God, so surely believe I on Hervey, his noblest work. If he be a criminal in your eyes, reject me also. Edla, am I so deeply sunk in your opinion, that you have no longer confidence in me? Edla, accept me as the pledge of his innocence!”—Edla turned away her face, covered her eyes with her hands, and said with deep pain: “I do not believe you! Pitiab!e one! you love an unworthy man!”

Only injustice against Hervey could have wrought up Nina’s beautiful spirit to rebellion against her sister. Her heart felt at this moment the deepest bitterness, and she turned violently away from Edla.

“You despise me then,” said she, quite with desperation, but outward calmness; “you reject me! Well then, I will flee to a breast that will not do so. Edla! I see now—that which I suspected—you never loved me; and that I henceforth—which I never considered possible—shall be able to live without your esteem.”—She rose and was about to go.

With an outbreak of violence, such as Nina had never before seen in her sister, Edla exclaimed:

“You know not what you say, nor what you do! Passion blinds you! I must save you against your will. Follow me!”

She seized Nina’s hand with the commanding look and the assured bearing which earlier had so much power over the tender child. Now also Nina felt herself incapable of withstanding her. A shudder went through her; she fancied she heard Count Ludwig approaching, she saw Edla place her hand in his; she tottered, her eyes closed, and she would

inevitably have fallen to the ground had not the Countess, who at this moment came up, caught her in her arms. Nina withdrew her hand from Edla, threw herself on the neck of the Countess, and feebly whispered, "Do not leave me!"

Edla heard these words. An unspeakable sorrow passed through her soul. She saw herself deserted, mistaken, feared by the being whom she loved most tenderly on earth; saw this being hanging even over the brink of an abyss.

Violent emotions of pain and envy went through Edla's heart as she saw Nina and the Countess, who with the tenderest caresses endeavoured to recal the half fainting girl to consciousness.—Edla softly approached, and taking Nina's hand, besought with a mournful voice, "Nina, my sister, follow me!"—"No! no!" was Nina's short answer, as she withdrew her hand.

"Let her be quiet! let her stay this night quietly with me," said the Countess; "to-morrow we will meet again up at the castle. She requires rest; you see, she wishes, herself, to remain with me."—"Are you afraid of me?" asked Edla, as she looked searchingly into Nina's face.

Nina made no reply. She pressed her pale countenance to the breast of the Countess, and perhaps did not hear Edla's question.—Edla, however, heard in this silence, saw in this turning from her, a heavy answer. Silently, and with a heart sick to death, she withdrew.

The Countess conducted Nina to her chamber; laid her upon her bed, gave her composing drops; and when she saw that, half stupified, she sunk into comfortable sleep, she left her, locked her door, sent off the two maid-servants, who were in the pleasure-house, to a dance in the next village, and went to the upper story to wait for the Colonel, whom that evening she expected to see there.

With slow steps Edla went to the castle. Her head was deeply bowed to her breast, her arms hung down powerlessly; her gait was unassured, her whole being had not its accustomed bearing,—her heart was violently torn. Poor Edla!

A moist wind whistled through the trees, then was the air as still as death. Large rain-drops fell heavily at long intervals. Behind her was heard the dull roaring of the sea. Edla slowly ascended the hill. The cricket sang, and the glow-worm shone in the grass, but Edla observed it not. Her way seemed long and difficult.

Arrived in her chamber, she found the air unbearably op-

pressive ; she opened the window, looked into the wide country, and breathed with difficulty.

Deep obscurity was round about. The sea was dark and stormy. Heavy, black-grey, shapeless clouds passed over the sky ; a blood-red stripe only edged the horizon, but even this rapidly sank into deep night. Black darkness covered the whole country, and a wild spirit seemed, with invisible, mischief-bearing wings, to hover over all.

Edla stood long and contemplated the night-world, which at this moment was a true image of her inward feeling. A painful sense of weariness and bitterness—those companions of her youth—fell upon her heart. She bethought herself how the lives of so many people pass on without joy ; she thought upon the long nights of the troubled and the un-comforted. The deep night of long centuries passed over her soul, in which lived whole nations, whose lives were a night-wandering,—whose sun only a blood-red ray, whose repose only the hush of the storm. She glanced upwards to heaven, yet not one star was to be seen ; all was veiled in blackness. She thought on Nina ; her heart bled, and her soul was “troubled even to death.” It seemed to her as if there were nothing good, nothing lovely, nothing constant in life ; that no friendship, no love, was capable of withstanding the fiery trial of time and temptation. Had not Nina’s heart turned itself from her ? Life looked at her from out of that dark night like a pale image of deceit, and the features of its countenance expressed only pain.

But Edla could think and feel thus only for a moment. In her breast, strength had only a short ebb. With the force of her will, with the light of her reason, she soon called back the stream, and her soul moved in its accustomed element. The words of the wise, the actions of the good, arose like bright constellations in her memory. She thought upon the transitoriness of life ; on eternal Love, on the Resurrection ; on firmness of faith : she tried her own heart—a tear fell upon its wounds,—and she was calm. Yet once more she let her glance pass over subjected nations and suffering humanity—over the shipwrecks of body and soul. She sunk herself into the sorrows of earth—she understood them all, pressed her hands tight upon her breast, and as if for every single one, pronounced with fervency the words, “Believe ! Endure !”

And, as with this she raised her glance to heaven, behold !

the clouds parted themselves directly over her head, and several stars gleamed forth like friendly eyes. Edla felt herself animated and strengthened. She stood long looking upwards, till the clouds again covered the stars. Then she went to arrange several things for the arrival of Count Ludwig, and never had her heart been more tranquil, her words and looks more kind.

When she returned to her chamber, she seated herself with a consoled mind, and listened to the ever increasing storm, to the heavy rain which lashed the window-panes, and to the fearful roaring of the sea. Brightly burned the wax-lights on her table, though the flames were wafted to and fro; deep sorrow and a high joy dwelt at the same time in her bosom. She took her pen and wrote:

“Is the little happiness of an individual worth speaking of in infinite life? Human happiness! Hence with it! The greatest, the most virtuous, have worn crowns of thorns!

“To develop oneself, to perfect oneself, for a higher light, for a higher strength. Yes! to comprehend the spirit of life—to endeavour to obtain it? That one must do.

“She shrinks before combat and trouble. Yes! It is difficult, I know it well, and she is yet young and weak; but my arm shall support her; shall combat for her. She shall not sink. With bleeding breast will I carry her, till my latest strength gives way. She shall not belong to him; no, never! Her heart will bleed; what matters that? Such blood-baths are strengthening. Mine will yet bleed stronger for her. O that I could alone suffer and endure for her! how happy should I be!

“To be solitary—to be alone—to be loved by no one—to be necessary to the happiness of no one,—to hear no sigh, to see no tear in our last hour! Why does this thought appear so terrible, so appalling to most people? The lonely are afraid of themselves.

“To be alone? Had we never inwardly loved—never given our hearts to another, then, methinks, with the thoughts directed to the wonders and mysteries of creation, it would not be hard to pass lonely and alone through the world; adoring only the Eternal and Alone One, who dwells above the stars; who is the origin of all thought, the unfold of all mysteries and of all enigmas,—then, methinks, it would not be hard to pass lonely and alone through the world. But from the moment in which one person loves

another exclusively, he needs mutual love—or he feels life to be barren and empty,—and this is a mournful weakness!

“Man must endure pain and emptiness. They cease. To know this, to think on this, is already repose, is already strength.”

CHAPTER XXXIX.—A NIGHT!

Stars twinkling nightly,
Thy life's path descry;
Stars beckon brightly
The weary on high.—*The Star Song.*

NINA lay on her bed. Her violently agitated feelings had given place to a sort of stupefaction, and she sank still deeper into an uneasy sleep, or rather dreaming unconsciousness. Suddenly it seemed to her as if the walls and the ceiling of her chamber disappeared, and an infinite desert opened before her. In the depths rocked the limitless sea, and a great black cloud hung heavily over a desolate country. A terrific form, with the aspect of an angry god, lay reposing upon the cloud, and scattered abroad wild lightning. His eyes directed themselves to Nina, and his lips spoke the agitating words: “Renounce thy love! Renounce joy, and every happiness! Renounce thy beloved!”

It appeared to Nina as if her heart powerfully raised itself in opposition, and yet an irresistible force compelled her to say “Yes!” She heard herself pronounce this “yes” of renunciation, and shuddered in her deepest soul. With that the cloud, with the form of terror, rose higher and higher, and vanished at length from her eyes. All appeared changed, and the sea was gone. The air was dull and heavy to suffocation. Upon a bald dreary height she discerned yet another form; a still, pale, advancing form. The features became more and more distinct, and she recognised him whom she so inwardly, so inexpressibly, so above all others, loved. He extended his arms towards her. The height upon which that beloved image stood seemed now firmly planted, as by an invisible hand, close before her. The form laid his hands upon hers, and looked long upon her with eyes full of sorrow. A smile of the deepest pain was round the mouth. Nina cried, “O tell me, tell me, that thou still believest in my love! That thou forgivest me!” The apparition let the hand fall from his heart, and Nina saw in its place only a deep and widely-gaping wound, whilst the form still fixed

upon her his heartbroken and inexpressibly mournful eyes. Nina felt that she must die. Suddenly, however, a strong, hoping feeling penetrated her soul; she felt the strength of love, and cried: "With my kisses will I heal thy wounds; with my heart will I fill up the space in thy breast; with the glances of my love will I reanimate thy eyes!" She stretched forth her arms, and felt herself, as by an invisible power, raised up to her beloved. His glance began to brighten, and her heart dissolved in rapture. With that there stepped between them a commanding figure; it was Edla! Icy coldness passed through Nina's breast, and paralysed her limbs. She saw Edward no more. She saw only Edla close by her bed. Her eye was stern. She held a cup in her hand, out of which she commanded Nina to drink. Nina was about to obey, yet the draught was bitter; she felt that it was the bitterness of life, and with indescribable abhorrence she thrust it from her. Edla raised Nina's head, held it firmly and fast, and compelled her to empty the cup. She felt the draught of death flow over her lips and down into her breast.

A confused sound of human voices, full of lamentation and horror,—a mighty rushing and cracking,—now struck upon Nina's ear, and woke her from that dream of anguish yet only to new terrors. She felt the earth under her totter. A dull frightful thundering filled the air, and a furious storm raged through it. Ah, no!—it was no imagining, no dream—a cold bitter wave struck actually upon Nina's lips. Terrified, she raised herself and collected her thoughts. Flowing waters rocked her bed, and swung it hither and thither. For a moment the moon burst through the storm-lashed clouds; it showed a rocking sea, that, rushing through the broken window in powerful gushes, rose higher and higher in the room. The slightly built pleasure-house seemed about to fall, and from all sides despairing cries for help were heard.

Nina recalled to mind the sudden floods* with which she had heard this country was often visited, and comprehended at once the greatness of the danger. She collected all her powers in order to think what was best to do. Hastily she arose, and endeavoured through the water to reach the door; but she found it locked. She cried for help, but could not hope, in the general confusion, that she should be heard.

* See Hülpher's Description of Nordland.

Holding then by the walls, she endeavoured to reach the window. She leaned far out, and saw only the ruin in its entire frightfulness. Dark, powerful, and tempestuous, the flood bore down everything; trees overturned; swimming cattle raised with distressed cries of anguish their heads above the waves, as if they would call for help. The moon's still beam rested upon the fearful scene, and showed no means of salvation. The flood appeared to have taken all by surprise as well as Nina. As Nina's cries for help were answered only by others like her own, and as the waves rose higher and higher, she felt that death approached her. Bitterly, and with a shuddering distinctness, this thought, like a foretaste of the last hour, passed through her soul. She saw how the waters already rose to her breast, and soon would stifle upon her lips all her cries and prayers; she thought how they would soon wash away the tears from her eyes, and close them for ever. And no beloved hand could clasp hers; no loving glance infuse strength and consolation! Nina wept; her hot tears fell into the all-devouring flood. In order to preserve her life as long as possible, she mounted upon the window-ledge; here the waters reached but to her knee. She held fast by the cross woodwork of the window, and waited patiently in this situation, whilst the wind and waves played with her hair and her white night-dress. Nina thought on Edla. An unspeakable feeling of remorse and pain passed through her breast; she longed to kiss her hand, and in this last moment to pray for her forgiveness. She thought on Hervey; she felt how inexpressibly dear he was, and how bitter it was to part from a world in which he lived. With her angel-like face looking upward to heaven, she fervently prayed for him and for compassion upon herself.

Higher still rose the waters; the waves beat with frightful force; they bathed Nina's rich and unloosened hair, and struck coldly and murderously her breast. "It comes—it comes, bitter death!" thought the trembling sacrifice. "Oh, my second mother, couldst thou see me now, thou wouldst forgive thy child! O Edward—O Edla!" With this cry of longing and the anguish of death she stretched forth her arms as if she would take a last parting from those who were dearest to her on earth.

She observed at that moment a black speck upon the wild flood, which appeared not to be driven by the waves, but rather to govern them. Hoping and fearing, Nina followed

it with her eye. It rose and sank with the waves, but always appeared again and approached nearer and nearer. Amid the confused roaring, and the crashing of overturned houses, amid cries for help and shrieks of terror, Nina thought she could now distinctly perceive the regular dash of oars; and as, foreboding death and almost beside herself, she exclaimed, "Edward—Edla!" the sound of her own name, dully, but yet distinctly, struck her ear. Anon and it sounded more plainly still. "Nina—Nina!" cried a well-known, beloved voice, through storm and night. A boat struggled with the wild waters, and parted them with powerful strokes. Two persons were in it. In the forepart lay a female form upon her knees—it was Edla. Now the boat reached the window. Edla stretched out her arms, and caught hold on Nina. Nina tightly embraced her sister. In the next moment she lay saved upon a soft covering in the boat. Like a sheltering roof, Edla bowed herself over her. Yet for a moment paused the man who plied the oars before the house, whence despairing voices cried, "Save—save us!"

"Save them!—save them!" cried Edla, without looking up, for her eyes were rivetted on Nina.

"Hence with us; the house is falling!" cried the man with the oars.

The roof gave way—one of the loosened stones fell upon Edla's shoulder; she sank upon her side, but still remained as defence and shield bowed over Nina. Struggling against the strongly advancing waters, the conductor of the boat only succeeded, by the most desperate efforts, to push off from the falling house. Death hovered over them. "We are lost!" said he with a hoarse voice. Edla looked up. A spar shot down from the roof, and threatened to overwhelm that light vessel. Edla sprang up, raised her uninjured arm, and offered her breast to that blind missile of death. It fell, struck her breast, but by the force of her arm was directed sideways, and fell close to the boat in the water. The force of the fall threw the waves high up together; they mixed themselves with Edla's blood. At the same moment another boat rowed past them towards the tumbling house. The voice of Baron H. was heard calmly and firmly directing the course of the boat.

"Whom have you saved?" said he in passing them.

"Nina," answered Count Ludwig's voice intelligibly.

"Good!" cried the Baron, now driven far onward by the

waves. The flood raged, the storm howled, the rain poured down in torrents; and amid horror and destruction might be heard the despairing cries of many voices. The words, "My wife—my child! Mother! Brother!" rang through the air, and went like swords to the hearts of those who heard them. From half-demolished cottages sounded forth grief and entreaties. Mothers held their weeping children from the windows: Count Ludwig remained deaf to their cries. He looked with falcon eye only upon his vessel; it shot securely thence over the wild flood, and the stillness of death reigned in it.

With manly strength Count Ludwig worked the oars, but the sweat of anxiety covered his pale forehead. Whenever an impediment stopped the course of the boat, he sprang up to the neck in water and made it free. With ever renewed strength he rowed onward, and saw how by degrees he approached the height on which the castle stood. There shone lights; there were heard calling, praying voices; there flowed tears full of anguish; there at length he landed.

CHAPTER XL—THE LAST HOUR.

Let us lift up our thoughts!—THORILD.

THE sun looked feebly down through grey clouds on the day after that terrible night. Feebly shone he upon Edla's couch, and upon the features on which death had already stamped his intelligible and inexorable "Thou art mine!"

A deep silence, interrupted only by a few low words, reigned in the chamber. An old clergyman at that moment, with the silver cup in his trembling hand, withdrew from Edla's bedside. He had administered the Holy Sacrament; he had united his prayers with hers, and now stepped silently aside, because he felt that this soul needed not his consolations. At the foot of the bed stood Professor A——, whom the wish again to see Edla had brought to Umenäs, and who arrived at the moment when her soul had raised its wings for flight towards the other world. With the pain of a human spirit, but with the resolve of a philosopher, contemplated he his friend. Near him, with quiet firmness, stood Count Ludwig; at the head of the bed, Clara and the sorrowful physician: both saw how a still holier calm—a still increasing clearness, diffused itself over the pain-distorted features of the sufferer. Nina was not absent. She had lain unconscious from the

time when Edla's blood streamed over her till within a few minutes of the present time, and now, almost borne in the arms of the Baroness, she entered the room.

Pale and tottering, beautiful and unearthly as a ghost which had left its grave, entered Nina. Her hands were folded close together; her eyes bathed in tears, her breath short and convulsive. An inward shudder shook her delicate frame; the pale lips whispered half unconsciously, "Edla! Edla!" Edla's eye beamed upon her with heavenly tranquillity, with unspeakable tenderness; and as she sank down on the bed, Edla embraced her with the uninjured arm, and laid her face close to hers.

"Child of my heart! my rescued child! my darling!" whispered Edla, with the most heartfelt tones, as her lips, for the first time, kissed Nina's mouth and eyes. Now would she permit herself to do this. The deep pain of Nina's bosom burst forth at these caresses in endless tears. Ah! at this moment both sisters felt how infinitely they loved each other. Presently, however, Edla interrupted this outpouring of the innermost heart, and inquired from Nina with sacred earnestness, "Wilt thou give to my last hour on earth repose and peace?"

"Command—govern me!" said Nina with a sincere impulse to sacrifice herself to show obedience.

"Lay thy hand upon my breast," prayed Edla.—Nina did so.

"Promise me never to become the wife of Edward Hervey."

"I promise it!" replied Nina. The thunderbolt of fate rolled over her.

"Swear to me to avoid seeing him!"

"I swear it!" answered Nina in entire submission.

"I thank thee!" said Edla. Great uneasiness worked in her features. Her eye shifted from Nina to Count Ludwig, from Count Ludwig to Nina; yet her lips spoke no word. Nina looked long at her, and at length gave her hand to Count Ludwig. She felt the most urgent necessity to sacrifice herself for Edla—to die for her.

"I promise obedience," said Nina to Count Ludwig.

He pressed her hand, and held it firmly in his.

Edla's eyes filled with tears; she saw the greatness of the sacrifice, but she accepted it. To leave Nina alone, unprotected in a world in which Hervey lived—and the Countess Natalie had the next right over her—was for Edla a thought before which she shuddered. For a long time, searchingly

and penetratingly, she contemplated Nina and Count Ludwig. An extraordinary strength had as it were elevated Nina's being; tranquil and self-possessed she stood like Iphigenia at the altar, ready to receive the blow which was to separate her from life. Edla did not see in this repose the strength of despair, but the power of a higher influence, the forerunner of approaching serenity, the final stability after long wavering. A ray of hope illuminated her countenance as she laid the hands of Nina and Count Ludwig in each other.

"Virtue unites you!" said she with the voice of inspiration. "God bless you! Beloved! Beloved! Live for goodness and truth, for the well-being of your country! O! I see better days coming! Receive my thanks!—receive my thanks, my heartfelt thanks, thou child of my heart! Thou, the dearest which I possessed on earth! Now I am calm, I can depart in peace!" She sank back wearied on the pillows. Nina seated herself on a stool by Edla's bed. The whole world was dead to her.

Edla's spirit, however, seemed to raise itself yet once more, higher and freer, upon the pinions of death. Is it not thus with many dying persons? I have often heard so, and have often even seen it. When death approaches, many a depressed eye raises on high its glance, and beams forth in a wondrous manner once more before it is extinguished; many a silent mouth opens itself then, for the first time, and speaks beautiful, evangelical words. Many a breath for the first time breathes forth, on the death-bed, a long-cherished love. In life it was so silent therein, so still, one fancied it was quite desolate there; but the deliverer approached, and now one hears the heavenly voice, which hitherto, like a captive bird mournfully speechless, for the first time sings therein. Yes, there are people who only first begin properly to live in the hour of death!

Edla's breast and shoulder had been shattered; the great loss of blood, the quickly prostrated strength, left no hope, nay, scarcely even any means possible for her recovery. Edla clearly felt her situation, and besought the physician to leave her as calm as possible. He agreed to her wishes; and after her wounds were bound up, she lay more easily on her bed. She looked tranquil and easy, and only when her eye fell upon Nina was an expression of pain depicted on her countenance.

"My dear friends," said she with the deepest cordiality

to those who stood around her, "mourn not for me. Strengthen me in this hour by calmness and resolution. What indeed happens here more than that which happens everywhere all the world over, and every hour? A child of the earth goes forth to his heavenly Father; it is so natural, so simple a lot which stands before every one. A——, my best friend!——" and her glance besought the bystanders to retire, whilst it motioned the Professor to step nearer. Nina alone remained unparticipant, sitting on the bed, hearing nothing and perceiving nothing. With low voice, Edla continued: "Why, my friend, this gloomy look? Ah! trouble not the bright day, which already casts its rays upon me through the night of death. I would so willingly see you calm and joyful. Is it so dark within you, or—are you not satisfied with me? Conceal not at this moment your thoughts from your true friend."

"Edla," said Professor A——, "what would I not give—what would I not endure for the certainty that that day will actually appear to you? That it is not merely a reflection of the earthly sunlight which now, blessing your last moment, shines only deceitfully. I confess, I cannot reconcile myself to the thoughts of your death. I have seen people die who have lived to the natural age of man in science and affection—over these I have not lamented. But you, Edla! you were only yet in the beginning, you were only yet a seeker, a thirster; why must you hence? The fountain to which your lips approached so near runs dry; life, with its pure treasures, vanishes from your glance—the grave is there. Edla! what now is science to you? What the thirst after it?"

"What are they now to me?" interrupted Edla with great animation. "O! what they always were—life, joy. Believe me the thirst is not quenched; it is perhaps at this moment stronger than ever, and this to me is the prophesying of higher fountains. I go hence, yes—it is a wonderful going! It rushes before my mind. But think you not that wondrous, secret joy trembles through me when I think on the certainty that the mist-enveloped limits will soon be overstepped by me, and I shall tread the unknown land of promise? Yes, my friend, my soul is impatient and full of longing; as a child sit I before the curtain, and yearn for the time in which it may be drawn up!"

"Childish curiosity on the brink of the grave!" said Pro-

fessor A——, with serious reproof. "Is such worthy of you, Edla?"

"I fancy," replied Edla, with gentle emotion, "that I am animated by purer feelings. O my friend! my soul is so joyful because I shall be soon able better to comprehend Him—the Almighty!" Edla folded her hands with fervency. "I shall see the enigma solved which presses so strongly on the human mind. I shall understand His wisdom and His love more inwardly; I shall better learn to love and adore Him. The deepest mystery of human life is death. And did not the mysteries, in earlier times, consecrate to a higher knowledge, my friend? The hour of my consecration is come. I welcome it with joy. I know that it will conduct me nearer to the origin of all light and all happiness. I know that my soul will thence drink life and refreshment. In what manner, and by what organs this may be, leave I, in confidence, to the great artist, who erected for my soul also the earthly tabernacle. He will do it well; he will make me capable of understanding and adoring him and his works. Yes, my friend, freed from earthly covering, I shall better understand myself, and learn more to love and to comprehend all."

"On what account," continued Professor A——, still discontentedly—"on what account is your path broken off, precisely at the moment in which your endeavours for yourself and others might be useful? The work you have commenced, Edla, that over which I rejoiced so much, shall now remain uncompleted—unused."

"This thought," replied Edla, "is, I confess, heavy to me. It appeared to me—yet, folly! I will not speak of it. It is past. Great works of the wisest men of antiquity have been lost—and should I, on account of my small labours, complain? More powerful minds will complete that which I have begun. I know it, and rejoice on that account."

"And what makes you so certain of that, Edla?"

"Eternal reason, which uninterruptedly bestows its revelation on humanity," answered Edla. "The words which my ears perceived, will also sound to those of another, and a tongue more powerful than mine shall proclaim them. The little spark will be preserved, and be made to advance its purpose by him who kindled it at first. Perhaps"—she smiled—"I shall write on my book in the beautiful stars which already shine forth there."

“It is certainly not difficult,” remarked Professor A——, “according to our own pleasure, to form fancies respecting one’s state after death. The fundamental question ever remains; upon what ground rest they? Such a groundless, amusing fancy is it indeed, best Edla, if you speak of completing a work whilst your hand moulders in the grave.”

“I jested,” replied Edla; “and yet I must believe that art is eternal, even as the human soul. Is there once a power in life; then must it also form or find its creative organs. I have taken leave of my little work; I shall soon leave my hand to the earth; but my thinking, my creating power I take with me—this is part of my spirit. Here have I passed my school-days; now I am about to be advanced to the university, to higher studies. It is my belief and my joy when I think, that now, for the first time, the true working-day begins.”

“The angels do not inquire and perplex themselves,” said Professor A——. “They live in the presence of God. Even Christianity itself shows us no other condition after death. But this state of abstract, inactive contemplation, if it were embellished also with harpings and songs of angels—would be for a soul like Edla’s—allow me to speak the word—at least tedious.”

“In the presence of God,” repeated Edla softly, and a wonderful brightness beamed from her deeply sunken eyes—“to see God! And what is all higher life, all effort of the soul, every pure suggestion, other than a seeing of God, a perception of His being; the realising of reality; the foundation of all truth and beauty? What are great deeds, pure actions, noble works, other than a consequence of this seeing of God? To see God is to live in Him in word and deed. That is happiness!”

“And shall we be sensible of this happiness with the same earthly vivacity which is our wealth here below?” asked Professor A—— with deep emotion. “Shall we press life to our hearts strongly and certainly as now? Edla! shall I see you again, recognise you again? Will you listen to the voice of a friend whom you possessed here? May I press your hand——” he ceased, for his voice trembled.

“What shall I say thereto!” answered Edla. “Have you not heard of one who was dead and buried; how He arose from the dead, called His friends by name, loved them as before, gave to them peace and blessing? Beyond this assurance,

beyond this promise, I know nothing on earth. I feel—it will be so. First the night—the shadows approach already. Night—then glimmers the morning. The sleepers awake—they become lively—ah, how beautiful! how glorious! Friend calls to friend; friend answers friend! There dawns heaven—wherefore question—wherefore fear? All is, indeed, clear! He has conquered——”

But earthly light, during Edla's heavenly visions, began to grow dim. Her strong soul sought in vain to struggle against the decay of nature. Consciousness left her; and only late in the evening, when the stars lit the heavens with their full splendour, she awoke from her trance of mind. The wild floods had slowly withdrawn to their bed; darkness laid its veil on the ruin; the wind ceased. The evening was beautiful and calm.

Edla prayed that they would draw her bed to the window. It was done, and with great rapture she glanced up to the beloved lights of heaven. “I shall soon be nearer to you!” whispered she. She then beckoned Nina close to her, and kissed the tears from her cheeks. She saw now how the bright drops stood in the eyes of her friend. She extended her hand to him and said:

“If you knew, dear A——, what bright hopes, what friendly appearances surround me at this moment—thanks to Eternal Love, which takes away the sting from death—you would rejoice with me!”

Professor A—— was silent, and Edla after a pause continued: “I have often heard say that we saw here on earth only a thousandth part of the lights that dwell above the earthly atmosphere. This thought has a wonderfully beautiful meaning to me, my friend; is the hope indeed audacious, that when we leave this sphere of vapour we shall see that book of immortal knowledge wherein we here below read with fervency irradiated with a higher light, and therefore shall better understand its signification? You turn away from me? You are displeased with me? A——, my true friend, tell me why?”

“I will tell you,” answered the Professor. “Every one of your thoughts, every one of your perceptions, is to me, at this hour, of inestimable weight; therefore I do not hesitate by even a hard word to demand a clearer knowledge of your views. Edla! this exultation in the hour of death, is opposed to my feelings! The doctrine which you profess demands,

methinks, more humility. Upon what does the Christian—if I rightly understand his religion—build his highest, his most joyous hope? Is it not in the certainty that there is no sin in his heart, no darkness in his soul, which could separate him from the Eternal? Edla! I wish you success,—in this feeling of certainty!”

Edla was long silent, and when she replied, a slight trembling passed over her lips. “Your reproof is severe,” said she, “but I thank you for it. Yet—I have loved Him with my whole heart, the Holy One, the All-good! I have endeavoured to go on the way which he pointed out to us—why should I not hope, not be joyful?”

Edla paused again; but soon afterwards she exclaimed with animation, and as it were with elucidation:

“And were it even so! were my hopes audacious, and had I misled myself, should I then, in that higher light, see my heart and my pilgrimage in life other than enlightened. O thus welcome be the light that shows to me my darkness! Welcome holy correction which chastises my failings! Eternal, sacred, glorious truth, welcome! Even if thou humblest me, I love thee; I seek only thee! The greatest pang shall be a cordial to me if it lead me to thee! O my friend, let me be glad, let my heart be full of exultation! My hope, and my joy, repose truly on Him, the Almighty! This belief will conduct all souls to Him, and all will taste of His truth.”

“Pardon me, Edla!” said the Professor, with increasing paleness, as he saw that Edla’s eye ever became brighter.

But joyful images and hopes seemed to have taken possession of Edla’s soul. With gentle smiles she turned to her friend and said:

“Is it not remarkable, my friend, how religion and philosophy unite in order to throw light upon our future life. The inquiries of reason show us that time and eternity are not two different things, as is commonly believed; they show to us that they exist at the same time, live in and through one another. The temporal without the eternal would be empty, as the eternal without the temporal. Man belongs to both worlds. His life is, at the same time, transitory and intransitory. It is a continual entrance and exit in and out of temporal life. If he live in God and strive after the kingdom of God, nothing within his soul can be taken captive and darkened. Amid all changes of infinite life he remains free, clear, and happy; a rational work-tool for that which the

Eternal love will have accomplished—he stands in the most inward harmonious relationship with nature, with mankind, and with God.

“What said the son of God? ‘I am,’ said he, ‘the door, the sheepfold. Whoever enters by me, he shall be happy, and shall go in and out and find rich pastures.’ How clear, how simple is this profound doctrine! Whatever spirit is born again through Jesus, through love and sanctification, shall, amid all the developments of life, find again himself, his friends, his love, his sphere of action, the food of his life. ‘He shall go in and out and find rich pastures.’”

“O thou!” continued Edla, as with greater fervency she clasped her arm around her kneeling sister—“thou, who art so dear to my heart—thus shall I again see thy beautiful beloved face in that better home. Let me find it again as a true image of the same soul, only strengthened and more fully developed. My last prayer for thee is not earthly happiness, but the ennobling and perfecting of thy nature. And now,” said she, as an expression of deep suffering passed over her features—“now I shall not be able to speak much more with thee—for I feel that death begins his work. I will leave him tranquilly alone—he may unloose the earthly bands. Leave me not! If thou canst bear it, I wish that thou shouldst witness my death-struggle. Man should not turn his eyes away from human sufferings. He should endure all, see all, understand all,—should become acquainted with all—life, death! A——, give me your hand. Thanks for your true friendship! Nina, thine—on my lips——”

She lost the power of speech, and seemed to suffer severely; but her eyes preserved their calm look, and continued fixed upon Nina. Death dimmed them more and more, yet still they remained rivetted on Nina, though they saw no longer.

Not every good person breathes forth his life as the flower its odour; not every wicked one ends it with agony. Often exactly the reverse of this is the case. We should never fear to fix a firm eye upon this discord between the outer and inward life. It is the most certain pledge of an accord which shall clear up all, and reconcile all, after the diapason of the grave.

Edla's death-struggle was long and difficult. The power of life was yet strong in her breast. She lived still two nights and two days without sign of consciousness. On the

last morning of her life, Nina stood, pale and beautiful as we image to ourselves the angel of death, bent over her and wiped the sweat from her brow; for the last time Edla opened her eyes, looked fixedly and strong upon Nina, and said with deep joy, "Ah! it is thou?" smiled, and closed her eyes. A few minutes afterwards the anguished breast ceased to heave. Nina closed her eyes with kisses.

"A beautiful, a noble strength has departed from earth," said Professor A—— in a broken voice, as he pressed Edla's cold hand to his lips. "Farewell, thou noble, thou strong-minded woman! Edla, farewell! Thou hast left me behind impoverished!"—So felt all, with deeply troubled hearts. Baron H. and Clara bore Nina away from the death-bed.

"Write to Edward Hervey!" besought poor Nina, with her last strength, from the Baroness. "Write and tell him what has happened—what I have promised. I cannot do it!"

The Baroness promised. Since Edla was deceased, and the Countess was ill from terror on the night of the flood, and thought of nothing but herself, the Baroness took Nina entirely under her motherly care.

Edla died; her face to the window and directed towards heaven. The stars looked down friendlily on the pale features, and watched over them in the still night.

CHAPTER XLI.—THE CRIME.

I have deeply repented, and have suffered much in this repentance. May it move you!

OUR readers will inquire, how and whence came so suddenly Baron H. here on the night of the flood? For explanation we need only say that they, on a little flight out of Paradise, unexpectedly met with Count Ludwig on his journey to Nordland, and immediately formed the resolution of following him there, with what views—our readers can very well divine. Thus they arrived at the same time with Count Ludwig, to save and to console, yet without being able to ward off the blow which struck more than one breast.

At Nina's prayer the Baroness wrote to Hervey. With the truest, the most precise exactness, she informed him of all that which had taken place, and closed her letter with these words:

"After this, you see clearly what is to be done. That you do not again see Nina appears to me most important to her peace. It is even her own wish, her own most urgent

prayer to you. A meeting with you could occasion her only the most cruel pang. The last prayer of her deceased sister was, that she should keep sacred the oath she had taken. God the Almighty strengthen her to do so! Let your strength be her example and her stay! Since Edla's death she has lain in unbroken slumber, and I thank God for it, for she needs rest after these agitating events; she needs the whole force of her powers for that which lies before her——

“I know you, and leave myself in your hands. Yet once more: *you must not see her again!* Believe me, I feel with you. I had wished, in fact, to prove to you how very much,

“With my whole soul, I am your sincerest friend,

“GRETA H.”

At the foot of the letter Nina's trembling hand wrote:

“Oh! Edward, farewell! Forgive!——farewell for ever!”

Before, however, this letter reaches Hervey, we must return to him, and accompany him upon his journey.

A feeling like that with which he parted from Nina, Hervey had never experienced. It would have been easier for him to have parted with life. His sanguine temperament, and his deeply religious feeling, were at this time insufficient to remove from him the incomprehensible pain which gnawed at his soul, like a herald of misfortune, during the whole of his journey. At length his journey was completed. He was directed to a small house that looked forth peacefully from amid thick-leaved trees; it looked as if virtue and goodness dwelt there. Edward's guide led him into a room which was partially darkened by drawn curtains. A man with a pen in his hand sate at a table covered with papers; a clergyman stood near him.

“Now are you ready?” inquired a hollow voice from a bed, the curtains of which were thrown back.

“It is ready!” replied the writer, in a stern voice; “it wants only your signature.”

“Is nobody yet arrived?” asked the same voice with uneasiness and impatience. At this moment Hervey entered. The sick man made a convulsive movement. A spectral, yellowish countenance, distorted more by passion than suffering, looked out from the curtains, and the wild, wide-opened eyes pryed into Edward's face.

“It is he! yes! it is he!” said the sick man half to himself, “he who saved my child! Your name is Edward Hervey?”

"Yes," replied Edward.—"Were you always called so?"

"To what purpose are these questions?" demanded Edward, who now on his part attentively observed the man.

"Do you not recognise me?" asked he.—"You are the person whose child fell into the water on Tärna heath——"

"Yes, and whom you saved at the risk of your own life; but you have seen me earlier—earlier——"

Edward contemplated him for a long time. "It seems to me," said he, "as if I had seen you, but I cannot at all remember where."

"Mr. Edward D., I was secretary to Count R. at the same time that you lived in the family. My name is Christian Malm."—Edward made a sudden movement. The sick man motioned with his hand. "Wait, you shall hear all! Do you read, sir—read aloud!"

The Judge of the district read aloud.

"Upon my death-bed, and about to appear before the judgment-seat of the Almighty, I testify and affirm before God the Highest, and before all people on earth, that Mr. Edward D. is innocent of the crime of which he is accused, against Count Rudolph R.; I alone am the guilty one. It was I who on that evening shot the Count; it was I who stole the money. I also, was it, who turned the false suspicion upon Edward D.—who spread about false reports of him and the whole occurrence: it was not done from hatred against him, but because I needed these circumstances for my own preservation. As regards Miss Elfrida, I am convinced that Mr. Edward D. acted only from good intentions; and that only as an honourable man he wished to save the daughter from the degrading, crafty schemes of the father. All that I heard and saw on that subject gave me the firmest conviction of his honest intentions. Let it be remembered that these words are the assurance of a dying man. Greater certainty of this, without doubt, may be obtained from Mr. D.'s letter to Count R. in his own handwriting, and which in his flight he left on the table behind him, and of which I took possession. It is appended unbroken to this.

"That all this is truth, and that I confess it out of my own free impulse, I protest in the name of God, before whose judgment-seat I shall soon appear. This confession will I certify by my own signature."—"That is right," said the sick man, with a weak voice. "Give it here to me."

They gave him the paper and pen; he subscribed it with a visible effort, and then wearied he sank back on his pillow.

Edward stepped close up to him. Upon his manly countenance might be read the deepest agitation of mind. "Christian Malm," said he, "what induced you to act in this manner towards me?"

"Nothing! nothing in this world! Only you see—I thus saved my own life. The devil whispered to me to throw all the blame on you—it was so easy, so probable."—"And what induced you to attempt the life of the Count R.?"

"Revenge, sir! revenge! He had maltreated me; he had kicked me, called me villain, and that before all his servants. And I was that which he called me—I was a villain. I was so, because he had disgraced me, because I thirsted for revenge. But I concealed myself under the mask of humility till the right moment came; I wound about and crawled like a worm till I succeeded with my poisonous sting. Amid the darkness and confusion I had an opportunity of firing at him, and taking away the money without being discovered. I repent not of that which I did to him. He deserved it, the furious, the mean——"

"Silence!" interrupted Hervey, sternly. "Unfortunate man, think on yourself; think what awaits you. Think on pardon, not on cursing."

"The time for hypocrisy is past, sir," replied the dying man with a faint rattling voice. "I have lied much; now I will be candid. That which I did against Count R. I cannot repent of. God forgive it me—if he can. But that which I did against you I have repented of. So repented, that never could I enjoy my ill-acquired wealth; that I am dried up and wasted, both body and soul. Since the time in which you saved my child at the peril of your own life,—ever since that moment a hell has reigned in my breast, and I found comfort only in the thought that before my death I would justify you. I have repented deeply, and suffered much in this repentance—may it move you! If you can, give me your forgiveness. It will make my death less bitter. Ah! you look so good and gentle, sir; good and serious as an angel of God. Forgive me!"—"I forgive you," said Hervey, and laid his hand on the head of the dying man.

"Thanks, thanks!" said he with incoherent voice. "Pray for me! My boy lives in your neighbourhood—see the child! Saviour of my child, pray—pray—for me!"

He drew Edward's hand to his lips. His eyes grew dim. Hervey sank in supplication on his knees by the bed of the dying. The clergyman followed his example. It was dusk

in the chamber; the shadow of death floated over it. The Judge, who had been present all the time, advanced near and contemplated the supplicant. He looked on the wild countenance of the dying man; he saw the deep inward devotion of Hervey's features; he listened to his inspired, half-whispered prayer, and he thought to himself—"No, it is no empty form, no unmeaning ceremony. Something glorious, something important, connects itself with this. And if the struggling lost spirit leave its covering, and all were dark both within and without, shall not the intercessions of the good be of some weight? Yes, they surround the struggling spirit like good angels; they find the way to his heart, and prepare him for reconciliation; they follow him on his way to the unknown land; they bow with him the knee before the throne of the Highest, and help him to pray—no, this is no idle deed!"

And as the stern worldly Judge saw the one so cruelly injured kneeling by the side of his enemy and praying thus fervently for his enemy's peace, he laid his hand upon his eyes, and was met there by a stranger—even by a tear.

A short time after this, Hervey was ready again for his journey. The astonishment, the agitation of these new disclosures awoke in his soul an overwhelming impression of happiness: he would be justified before the world, and thus the essential impediment which had been opposed to his union with Nina would be set aside. His heart burned with gratitude to God; and the vehement longing once more to see Nina, to defend her, to win her, impelled him to the utmost speed. He journeyed day and night. The late occurrence, the future; hope, love, impatient expectation—all assisted to put him in that state of feverish excitement which drove him on from place to place. He saw at length the well-known country; he was greeted by terrible rumours. He hastened to his home, and there he received—the letter of the Baroness!

CHAPTER XLII.—MOONLIGHT.

Stilly, O stilly
 Sleep after storm and snow;
 Lonely child! chilly
 Lie sea and dale so low;
 Now thou to death must go!
 Stilly, O stilly!

Hush thee, O hush thee!
 In sighs thy soul exhale;
 Silence! keep silence!
 Life now bids thee farewell!
 Poor one, good night, sleep well!
 Hush thee, O hush thee!

Svanhvit's Song.—ATTERBOM.

Love makes all things possible.—LAMENNAIS.

THERE is also a moonlight in human life—a moonlight in the hearts of men. It ascends cheerfully after a disquieting,

stormy day. It is the reconciling of light and shade; a bright twilight; a still melancholy; a soft slumber of feeling; a woe—but it also is a benefit: then are shed quiet tears, gentle and refreshing as the dew upon the scorched-up valleys. Often, however, is it a long time before this repose, this heavenly light, descends into the heart; often is it tempested so long.

A day of suffering was past; for the first time had Nina truly experienced what a storm of the soul is. She reclined on a couch; the door of the saloon was open, and she looked with fixed eyes into the large dark chamber in which so lately had lain the corpse of Edla. The moon shone through the window. All the friends had accompanied Edla to her last resting-place. Nina alone remained behind; she had requested it as a favour. Deep stillness reigned around her; the dull rushing of the sea was only heard. Nina opened the window, but the coming air cooled not the burning pain of her bosom. The thought of Hervey afflicted her with unspeakable anguish; she felt herself so guilty towards him; she accused herself of having made his life desolate and for ever darkened.—“Can he forgive me?” questioned she of herself again and again.

When she thought how his beloved glance must rest upon her with pain and quiet reproach, O how she then longed that she might throw herself at his feet! but then she saw the bleeding figure of Edla warding off death from her, and she would do all for her who was dead for her sake—but Hervey, why should he suffer for her? Thus was her soul tossed hither and thither between contending feelings—between doubts and painful questionings; she no longer knew what to do, nor what was right nor wrong. She accused herself as being the occasion of all misfortune—she detested her own life. And then—oh, dear reader! hast thou ever lost a friend who was dear to thee as life, and has thy injustice darkened your separation? Hast thou felt burning remorse, and hast known that *never* on earth canst thou confess this to the lost one? Hast thou had hours in which thy heart yearned after him or her so——so that thy soul was rent asunder, and it felt as a martyr—that thou wouldst give thy life, thy everlasting salvation, only to see him again for one moment, to press his beloved hand, to cling to the beloved breast, and to weep——and weep——?

Hast thou ever felt thus?—Oh, then wilt thou understand Nina; thou wilt understand her sufferings, and comprehend how that involuntarily, with wildly beating heart,

she extended her arms, and full of anguish, exclaimed, "Edward! Edward!"

The door of the saloon softly opened. A man habited in deep mourning stood there. At sight of him a shudder of terror and joy passed through Nina, and with a low exclamation she sprang up.

The dark-clad man approached the door of the room in which she was, and there he remained standing; he leaned against the door-post, and looked upon her with an indescribable glance. Suffering and death-like pallor lay upon his countenance. Ah! it was the look which Nina had seen in her dream; they were the beloved features; his hand lay upon his heart—was it to hide the bleeding wound? Nina heard his short, excited respiration.

Her first feeling was to throw herself in his arms, and hide her face on his breast—then she thought that she must flee away from him.

"Edward! Edward!" cried she, "why are you come? Know you not that we are separated—that I have renounced you?"—"I know all," replied Hervey.

"Forgive me!" cried Nina despairingly, and fell on her knees.

"I come with no reproaches—I come to bless you," said Hervey, with heavenly goodness in voice and look. He advanced to her, raised her, led her to the sofa, and seated himself by her. He held her hands firmly in his, and looked at her with a serious, penetrating glance.

"You did not doubt me?" asked he.

"No! no!" was all that she was able to answer.

"Neither did I doubt you," continued he; and his countenance was lit by an angelic smile. "Well then, beloved!" said he, "we are not separated—not for ever separated. For a short time here on earth are we severed from each other; then shall we meet again in heavenly love, in firm faith—our souls remain united! Eternally, inwardly beloved," continued he, "thou most lovely of God's gifts to my life! Have peace, peace—with thyself; peace with the Eternal power which disposed our fate! Thou hast—done right! Thou couldst not have done otherwise! A higher power has spoken—we must obey!"—"We must obey!" repeated Nina faintly. She bowed her head in the deepest grief, and leaned her forehead upon her closely clasped hands.

"Be calm—be happy, even on earth; then shall I be—not unhappy," said he.—"Not unhappy?" repeated Nina.

"Trust in the Eternal Goodness! It is with thee!"

"With thee!" repeated Nina, weeping vehemently.

Hervey arose. His voice trembled. "I would see thee once again," said he; "I felt that I must hear thee once more—must thank thee! Thy love has made me inexpressibly happy; the remembrance of it will brighten my whole life; it will be my joy in my last hour—my hope in that other land where we shall meet again. Peace—blessing upon thee, thou angel! thou beloved! Fulfil thy duties; live—for God's sake!"

Nina rose up. She knew not how it happened, but he blessed her with such powerful, such heavenly words and tones, that a wondrous joy thrilled through her breast. She listened to his words as to the voice of God; and as he clasped her close to his heart—as he, for the first and the last time, pressed his lips to hers, then certainly stood invisible angels near them, and bowed their immortal heads in admiration of two loving and suffering mortals.

Nina woke as out of a dream. He was gone! She laid her hand on her forehead, and felt his tears on her hair. She kissed them from her fingers with fervent love.

"He has blessed me!" said she, and her soul was still. And as she stood there, praying in pain and rapture, adoring and full of foreboding, she saw, as once before had been the case, that the figure of the cross fell upon her breast, whilst the glory of heaven streamed around her. Now were the dark passages of her life made clear to her. Courage and determination returned again into her breast, and awoke there a higher and a higher heaven. BUT HE?

After he had communicated to another tranquillity and peace, strength left his own breast. He stood still upon the threshold of his own lonely house, and looked back over the devastated country; he contemplated the ruins of his own happiness—his wholly desolated life. A wretchedness, never before experienced, came over his soul, and with the Divine sufferer on the cross, he exclaimed:

"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?"

THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR'S SONG.

Blanch thou cheek! but heart be vigorous!	Up! a sacrifice to greatness, Truth, and goodness! up to God!
Body fall, but soul have peace!	
Hail to thee, Pain—searcher rigorous, Kill me, but my faith increase!	Up to labour! up, and shaking Off the bonds of sloth, be brave— Give thyself to prayer and waking, Till I slumber in my grave!
Sin, o'er sense so sweetly stealing! Cold, which would my strength impair!	
Forth with you! from life and feeling! Forth, my cross I gladly bear!	Slumber,—waken—and, ah! glory, View entranced, face to face, Him who pardons sinners hoary; Him whom angels hymning praise!
Up! with eye of clear sedateness, Read heaven's law, writ bright and broad!	

But wherefore this song? the reader will say. It suits the repentant sinner; the constant nun; it becomes the martyr; but not the soft and early-married Nina! Yes, also her; but not her only,—it becomes all those who suffer and are tried unto purification. These will recognise it—it has tones and words from their own bosoms.

CHAP. XLIII.—MARRIAGE—THE CRADLE—THE GRAVE.

Weep not for me, although before my summer,
Although before my autumn time I die.—TEGNER.

WE array ourselves for marriages in flowers; and wear dark mourning-dresses for the last sorrowful festivity which attends a fellow-being to his repose. And this often might be exactly reversed. But the custom is beautiful—for the sight of a young bride invites the heart involuntarily to joy. The festal attire, the myrtle wreath upon the virgin brows; all the affectionate looks, and the anticipations of the future, which beautifully accompany her—all enrapture us. One sees in them a new home of love raised on earth; a peaceful Noah's Ark on the wild flood of life, in which the white dove of peace will dwell and build her nest; loving children, affectionate words, looks, and love-warm hearts, will dwell in the new home; friends will enjoy themselves under its hospitable roof; and much beautiful activity and many a beautiful gift will thence go forth, and full of blessing diffuse itself over life. There stands the young bride, creator of all this,—hopes and joys go forth from her. No one thinks of sufferings at a marriage festival.

And if the eyes of the bride stand full of tears; if her cheeks are pale, and her whole being, when the bridegroom approaches her, fearful and ill at ease—even then people will not think of misfortune. Cousins and aunts wink at one another and whisper, "I was just so on my wedding-day—but that passes over with time!" Does a more deeply and more heavily tried heart feel perhaps a sigh arise within, when it contemplates the pale, troubled bride, it comforts itself in order not to disturb the marriage joy, with, "O that is the way of the world!"

Thus also comforted herself the Baroness H. on Nina's wedding-day, without being able to find the least comfort in it. A hundred times had she whispered to her disquieted heart the above-mentioned phrase, yet notwithstanding, the tears filled her eyes as soon as she saw Nina. Baron H. had already remarked it several times. He went to his wife and

took her hand: "The boy sleeps," said he; "Clara sits by the cradle, and will not come away from him."

The Baroness pressed her husband's hand. "Nina may become a mother," said she to herself consolingly; and in that she found the only comfort for the quiet, pale bride.

Nina lay cold and almost unconscious in her arms on the evening of the marriage-day.

"I will myself care for my daughter," said Countess Natalie; "leave her to me!"

"I will not part with her from my arms, let whoever may come!" replied the Baroness with decision, as even at that moment the bridegroom entered. The Countess went forward to meet him.

About a year after this day I saw Nina again, and never shall I forget the sight. Pale from sufferings she had gone through, lay she upon a snow-white pillow. A white bandage was closely bound round her forehead, concealing her hair. The white, delicate lace of her cap bent itself as if caressingly around her delicate countenance. All that surrounded her was dazzlingly white; she herself was like a snow-drift upon which the last rays of the sun falls. At her side lay, in its first morning sleep, her little daughter. I saw that Nina felt the joy of a mother. It was a charming sight to see those beautiful eyes beaming, to hear those graceful lips say,

"Oh! no one knows what it is till they themselves have experienced it, at once freed from all pain, to see that a child is born—to stretch forth the hand, and really to clasp it—to feel it near one!"

And her white, feeble hand was extended caressingly over the little one, which seemed to perceive it with pleasure. "She shall be called Edla!" continued she tenderly; "I will give to her a guardian-angel. May she resemble her——"

I left Nina with the consolatory feeling that henceforth her life would not be joyless. But the image of the young, pale mother stood sorrowfully before my soul. Never had I seen a human being so pale.

When I saw her still twelvemonths later she was yet paler; but now it was natural, for she lay in her coffin, and was beautiful even there. Her little daughter was gone before her—she followed her. I saw the stern Count Ludwig stand by the coffin. He wept like a child.

When Nina felt her death approaching, she wrote the following words to Hervey:

"I have lived—because thou wishedst it. Because thou blessedst me have I had strength to live at a distance from

thee—and I have not been unhappy. I have known the joys of a mother, but the pains of a mother also. I die, and thank God. If I loved thee above all things on earth, the righteous God will not condemn me. It was my strength—my virtue. In this moment, in which all becomes already dark, and in which my eye will be extinguished—in this moment art thou still the light and the hope of my soul. O how like a beam of light didst thou break through the twilight of my life, and give to me warmth and colour! Ah! and I darkened thine! But my time will also come to make thee happy—to make thee rejoice. Listen to me! My soul is about to depart; receive its last sighs, its last joyful hope—listen! In thy hour of death I will appear to thee. When it becomes evening to thee—when thy clear glance begins to grow dim, and the shadows of death to ascend around thee—then, then will it be permitted me to fetch thee into the world of light, where Edla is already beforehand, where she will learn to know and to love thee; where we for ever inseparable, shall be—I THINE, THOU MINE! I complain not that we were divided on earth. I was not worthy of thee. God has tried me, and has brought me nearer to thee. Edla, I come. When was I ever disobedient to thee, Edla?—Edward! Beloved! O God bless thee, and be gracious to me for thy sake! God bless, God bless thee!

“NINA.”

CHAPTER XLIV.—A CHRISTIAN.

O let it please Thee, my free will's up-offering,
 Thou who dost scan the secrets of my heart:
 I take with love the cup of Thy high proffering,
 Even as with love that cup Thou dost impart.—VITALIS.

WHEN a heart breaks under the burden of its sorrows—when sickness strikes its root in wounds opened by pain, and life consumes away slowly to death, then none of us should say that that heavily-laden heart should not have broken; that it might have exerted its strength to bear its suffering. No; we would express no word of censure on that prostrated spirit because it could not raise itself—before its resurrection from the grave.

But beautiful, strengthening, and glorious is the view of a man who presents a courageous and patient breast to the poisoned arrows of life; who, without defiance and without weakness, goes upon his way untroubled; who suffers without complaint; whose fairest hopes have been borne down to the grave by fate, and who yet diffuses joy around him,

and labours for the happiness of others. Ah, how beautiful is the view of such a one, to whom the crown of thorns becomes the glory of a saint!

I have seen more than one such royal sufferer, and have always felt at the sight, "Oh, could I be like this one—it is better than to be worldly fortunate!"

But I must here remark a difference. There is a misfortune in which we see a higher hand, an inevitable fate; it is like a thunder-stroke out of the clouds. But there are sufferings of another kind, of which the torture resembles a perpetual needle-pricking. These proceed from the hand of man; these arise in families, where married people, parents, children, only live one with another to make home a hell: there are the plagued and the plaguers; it were difficult to say which are most worthy of pity;—the unhappy ones! The first kind of misfortune is most easy to endure. It is much, much easier to suffer under the hand of God than under that of man. Lightning from above gives death, or light and exhilaration; the prick from the hand of man wastes away life like a slow cancer; it embitters the heart—bitterness is the simoom of life; where it blows, there exists a desert. But even here is there a means of deliverance. There is an angel-patience which blunts the wounding point, which sanctifies the sufferer under his pang, and at length improves others by this means. There is a Socratic courage which converts all Xantippean shower-baths into refreshing rain; there is a hero-mood that breaks the chains which it finds too heavy to be borne. Many a tormented one proves himself, but he proves himself before a higher eye; he may, if he will, prevent his heart becoming embittered, for that is the worst which can happen to him.

Observe this country, where otherwise thou sawest only unfruitful morasses, endless woods, and desolate pastures. It is no more the same: friendly habitations extend themselves in the valley and on the heights; large corn-fields rejoice the eye; numerous herds cover the rich meadows. Everything bears evidence of a country where all goes well in it. And who has called all this forth? A man, whose life's happiness was destroyed by fate—who knew no happiness but that which he prepared for others. Edward Hervey was the creator of this prosperity. He only rescued himself from the suffering which seized upon his life by compulsory activity of body and mind. Thus he conquered his suffering; and after he knew that Nina was no longer on earth, this victory was easier to him.

Justified in the most splendid manner before the world, Hervey soon saw himself the object of the most honourable and distinguished attention; and advancement of every kind was offered to him. Honour and respect found him in his retired corner of the country; yet they had no longer any power over him, and he calmly declined all. He preferred completing the work which he had begun, in the sphere in which he was already beloved and known. He cultivated the land, and formed the manners of his little community. He based all on order and duty, and gave the glory of it to God. His gentle glance—his prudent counsel—his strong hand—were ready for every one. He was never seen to be gay, but calm and friendly was he at all times. He loved mankind, honoured goodness, and regarded with love all of beautiful which the world had to offer. His age was like his youth; his life was a divine service.

And might we not, my suffering friends, endure life better if, with powerful resolution, we turned away our thoughts from our pains; if we directed them to that which is higher and more beautiful? Does this world indeed lack much for this purpose? Ah! there is so much that is good—so much that is noble in mankind—so much that is elevating in nature—so much that is rich in consolation in books—so much hope above the stars, and especially so much recreating strength in all occupation, and in all occupied persons. Who indeed grafts the fruit-tree and does not enjoy the vigorous shoots and the promised fruit? The reader will remind me that I have forgotten the chief fountain of consolation and of joy—the deepest, the most curative, often the only one But why name that first which we all know so accurately, so inwardly? Besides, if there were not this fountain, who could attribute worth to the others? That which alone gives life to all, is a drop from the Eternal.

But time speeds. The day of my history draws to its end—it is evening.

The mists descend from the heights of Tärna. Like fleeting, beckoning ghosts, they float onward. They rise up and sink down. They breathe over the earth mournful and damp. They softly spread the death-veil over the grass; wherever they pause, they leave tears behind. The wind sighs dyingly in the trees. It is evening.

The mists creep around Hervey's small dwelling; they come up and gloom his windows, and veil from him the friendly earth. They seem as if they were come to fetch

him thence, and draw up their light airy chariot. They seem to know that his last hour approaches, and that he is prepared for his journey.

But will not my friendly readers be astonished that the pen, which ought only to be dedicated to pleasure, passes on from one death-bed to another, just as if every-day life were a continued procession of corpses? Fear nothing! Follow me yet a little way—you shall see no gloomy picture. Joyful young maiden, fear nothing. That which I shall exhibit to thee is only joy—glorious, blessed joy! Do not let the thoughts disturb thee that this sketch is only fiction—I ASSURE THEE, IT IS ENTIRE, PURE TRUTH!

There sate at the window, in a comfortable arm-chair, the noble sufferer of whom our story has told. Powerless, but still and calm, he leaned his head against the white pillows. A wonderful serenity rested upon the features of the dying man; dark locks, partially grey, fell over the clear, high forehead; he is not alone. The mother rests already in the quiet bosom of the earth, but Maria stands faithfully by his side. She alone, in this hour, will he have with him. How the flame of life yet flickers before it goes out! It sinks, and then ascends; it dims, and then brightens anew—it will not leave the covering in which it has dwelt so long. Hervey sinks in a light slumber; it seems as if death had taken hold on him, but he awakens once more, folds his hands, and exclaims with a joy which is no longer of the earth:

“Ah, what glory! Is it possible that I am still on the earth? Is there here such bliss? God—my God! What an atmosphere of heaven! Am I yet the same? Is it possible that Edward Hervey can be participant of joy like this on earth? Jesus! rich in love, that is thy life! thou dispensest overflowing measure—Eternal love!”

Night passes over, the morning dawns. Still tarries Hervey upon earth amid images of beautiful delight. A beam from the ascending sun pierces through the mist, and brightens the face of the dying man. His cheeks are illumined with a living glory—his eyes beam; he raises himself, extends his arms, and exclaims with an expression of superhuman joy and love, “Nina!”—He sinks back a corpse. His spirit is departed.—SHE conducted him home.

THE END.

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